FANNY VERNON,

OR THE

FORLORN HOPE;

A

TALE OF WOE:

CONTAINING

Scenes of Horror and Diſtreſs that happened during the War in America.

O INCONSTANT MAN!
HOW WILL YOU PROMISE! HOW WILL YOU DECEIVE!

Otway.

Here I kneel;
If e'er my Will did treſpaſs 'gainſt his Love,
Either in Diſcourſe, or Thought, or actual Deed;
Or that my Eyes, my Ears, or any Senſe,
Delighted them, or any other Form;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will, tho' he do ſhake me off
To beggarly Divorcement, love him dearly.

OTHELLO.

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INTRODUCTION.

AN ALLEGORY.

IF it could be proved, though no ſpirit was ever really ſeen, yet there is no doubt but as mental companions they exiſt; for the wind was never ſeen, and yet how certain its exiſtence, and we believe it becauſe we feel it: and do we not feel two contrary ſpirits within us all our lives, and one of them ſo active that we have naturally enough given it a name, Conſcience:—it is that we ſo often endeavour to ſilence or elude, frightened at the aſpect we ourſelves have given her, for ſhe is never ſevere but to our crimes; while we, forgetful of her graceful happy dominion during

our

our innocence, only give her a name when ſhe is offended, ſtrenuouſly endeavouring to ſave us from the perpetration of ſome bad deed, or, by an acute retroſpect, convicting our minds, and bringing us back to expiate by repentance, when the deed is paſt recal; and as the dictates of conſcience, if attended to, can better ſecure our peace of mind than all the viſible help in the world, the purport of the following ſtory is to intereſt in the behalf of, and inculcate in young minds a love, reverence, gratitude, and attention to, this our beſt friend and guardian angel, Conſcience; and, if in one out of twenty it counteracts a tendency to a hardened heart, I ſhall pardon myſelf for the preſumption of attempting it.

FANNY

FANNY VERNON,

A

TALE OF WOE.

THE moon darted tranſient through the ſwift-paſſing clouds, on the lone manſion of Marmaduke Herbert. His family were in the depth of ſleep; and the rovers of the Welch mountains, which ſurround them, approached not for ſome hours their morning's freſh brouſe, when the howling iſſue of the winds from the ancient grove gave horrors to the night, and bore forth the ſad lamentations of Fanny Herbert's

good genius, who being diſtanced by her evil one during an excurſion from home, now returned ſolitary to thoſe haunts where ſhe had for ſixteen years cheriſhed her pupil in truth and ſimplicity.—Sad place of ſweet remembrance! cried ſhe, where theſe mountains ſo long reigned in her knowledge of the world; Do I now loſe her?

The evil genius, reſtleſs and jealous, having left Fanny fraught with fallacious dreams, alſo entered the ſhade, and thus gave reply: "Is not the guidance of hu-
"man paſſions to be ſhared by us, each
"according to the claim their ward's in-
"dulgence or forbearance gives to either?
"For ſixteen years I have ſcarcely had a
"moment's influence with our fair charge;
"ſo attached has ſhe hitherto been to your
"dictates, and regardleſs of mine; till Love,
"my fairy miſleader of young hearts,
"ſtepped in to my aid; while you, calm,

credulous,

" credulous, and confiding, ſlept in an
" idle hour, I, watchful, ſeized my turn,
" and gained a ſtep in fair Herbert's heart,
" that ſhall lead me to an aſcendency in her
" mind Benevolence dreamt not of. Away!
" away! the child is mine."—Not quite,"
returned the good genius; " but even if
" your pernicious arts ſo far prevail, I will
" not deſert her, but wait a mourner by
" her ſide till ſome cruel deluſion of yours
" awaken her to a ſenſe of duty; then,
" if ſhe ſhould incline to my guidance,
" we will embrace, though in worldly
" miſery:—Be it either in poverty, ſorrow,
" or the hour of death, my aſcendancy
" ſhall give that grace to her boſom
" which you are ſo well practiſed in deſtroy-
" ing."

The rivals at length agreed to return and wait the riſing of their ward, to ſee whoſe power the wayward mood of the morning

moſt admitted; the one relying on her good habits, the other on the freſh-planted ills in her mind.—Fanny aroſe, but no longer blithe as the lark which uſed to awaken her at her father's:—her head ſunk on her hand; her eyes were thoughtfully caſt on the diſtant expanſe of ſea which lay before her window. There ſilence and inaction nouriſhed the miſeries of her heart till they broke forth, and ſhe aſked of Heaven, Why ſhe was in love? Why doomed, at the early age of ſixteen, to a tormenting paſſion ſhe diſapproved? "Why," continued ſhe, "is my cheek warm when Vernon is "near? Why forſaken when I ſee him de-"part? Why, if I apply to religious "books, do they ſeem to treat on the ſub-"ject? May I not then complain to you, "parent Heaven, and aſk in the name of "all the youthful of my ſex, why this "penſive paſſion is more deeply inflicted "on us than men? Why conſumptions are

"ſilently

" ſilently to ſweep us off? or ſmiling bro-
" ken-hearted women to be united to men
" who have the power to chuſe without
" that of pleaſing? Is it divine laws or
" human cuſtoms which have ordained
" this?"

Sympathy then drew her eye from the diſtant ſcene to the beach where her lover walked with arms folded and every attitude of depreſſed ſpirits. Soon after, he paſſed her window, and, bowing, waved his hand to ſea, where he was ſoon to ſail. " Ah, look
" not ſo melancholy, cried Fanny, leſt I
" fly to you, and, in your arms, tell you
" there is no cauſe; for where you lead, I
" will follow, though it ſhould be to de-
" ſtruction.

" Minds ſick of happineſs muſt be phyſick'd.

SHAKESPEARE.

" Dwell then on the loved countenance, " like the bird on the ſerpent's eyes, till it " is in its jaws," ſaid the afflicted genius, who felt her rival's power increaſing every moment; and Fanny, giving way, already plauſibly reaſoning with herſelf, that ſhe had nought to return to at home but old moping neighbours; no duty to perform but the employment of needle-work, or tending the green-houſe plants. When the good genius, collecting all her loſt power over Fanny's mind, movingly preſaged that the time might come when thoſe old neighbours would be recollected as friends (when ſtrangers would give no aſſiſtance) and in vain called on for help which they could not afford; and that bitterly wringing thoſe hands, ſhe might in vain wiſh they were at tranquil employment in her parents' happy family, which, if ſhe once deſerted, might never be in her power to regain.

" But

" But away with ſuch ridiculous appre-
" henſions," ſaid the unfortunate Fanny Herbert; " I will not give way to them:" and thus finally excluded the departing friend. New proſpects expanded to her view the moment the good genius was expelled.—They opened promiſing: every thing appeared alluring, ſafe, and free for the wiſher. Retention of mind was no longer practicable. She bounded from reſtraint; gave free indulgence to her romantic thoughts; forgot her parents; and believed herſelf happy: " For I love Ver-
" non," cried ſhe; " and Heaven, which
" permitted it, will ſmile on us. Yes, I
" will conſent to marry him, elude the
" vigilance of my aunt, and follow Vernon
" over the world."

The good genius drooped beſide her, but had no longer power to influence her determinations: the evil one now had ſole

dominion; and had only good habits and youthful fears to encounter with; for this was Fanny's firſt eſſay from her native mountains, and ſhe was now only ſent forth, on account of the tenderneſs of her diſpoſition, to nurſe an invalid aunt at Southampton, whoſe chamber window was oppoſite to that of an officer who employed much of his time in drawing. Fanny often looked down on his table, where lay ſcattered many prints and ſketches; which idle curioſity being obſerved by the officer, he alſo took a liberty, and held up to the window, for her inſpection, a beautiful Madona that he was then finiſhing. Fanny looked at it, and deſired her aunt to do the ſame, who, too much arouſed by the incident, ordered her from the window inſtantly, and by a conſequent unſkilful lecture, in which more mention was made of handſome, gay, young officers, and danger, than of the indecorum of the action, ſhe rendered him

of

of conſequence in Fanny's mind; and the next time ſhe looked at the window, it was a ſtolen glance, and ſhe thought the officer was indeed very handſome, and that he looked dangerous; and when he ſhewed her any drawings, thought him alſo very complaiſant and engaging, and curtſied in return. In a ſhort time after, ſhe ſaw him give the word of command; it was the firſt time Fanny had ever ſeen ſoldiers in martial array; ſhe was in high ſpirits: he bowed to her; ſhe was ſtill more elated: but it was the triumph of a moment only. The muſic had ſoftened her heart; the ſprings of affection all flowed, and the ſcarlet and gold had prevented any acceſs to the brain. His image ſunk into the deepeſt receſſes of her heart, and there remained till it ceaſed to beat: for the preſent, a ſigh finiſhed the ſcene. She returned home penſive—thought much of the officer, and allowing him every grace and virtue, of which old friends only

be competent judges. She became enamoured of his character as well as perſon; and they improved on each other every day; for ſhe was fair and innocent, and he was aſſiduous, and in love. They ſometimes met in company, and at the rooms. But the balls which ſhe did not frequent grew tireſome to Vernon.—Powdered ladies, with bracelets and trimmings, were ſuperfluous: Fanny wore no ornaments—All his drawings were now deprived of them, and bore her aſpect; while her eyes acknowledged obligations as ſhe ſaw the likeneſs growing beneath his hand.

Vernon's regiment was under ſailing orders for America.—The lovers could not part: a promiſe of marriage was exchanged; and as ſhe never yet had forfeited her promiſe, that good habit now led her on to regard her promiſe as ſacred. The ceremony was performed on board a ſhip, which

which ſailed a few hours afterwards, when ſuddenly the precipitate Fanny became overwhelmed with aſtoniſhment at all that paſt; ſcarce could ſhe believe ſhe had been a free acting perſon in the paſt ſcene, and reproached fate as her ruler.

Thus awakened, ſhe found herſelf ſailing for a diſtant country, with a ſtranger, having treacherouſly left her parents to unavailing ſorrow and anxiety for her loſs. She ſaw her huſband walking on the deck with other officers, but was afraid to approach him, nor did ſhe find any pleaſure in the ſight; and turning her eyes from that row of officers, with a low voice, but much energy in the preſſure of her hand on the arm of a ſailor, aſked if any more boats went to ſhore, for land was yet in view: ſhe received a harſh negative, confirmed by an oath, and ſlunk down into the cabin; where, being alone, her eyes became fixed on the floor,

while regret and apprehenſions ſucceeded each other, rapidly chaſing away volatility and hopes. Their varniſhing power was no more, and the falſe veil became entirely rent from the truth. Uninfluenced now by that ſafety, affluence, and eaſe in life, which prompts to luxury and new attainments, ſhe foreſaw how little conducive to her happineſs her change of ſtate would be, and began to ſuffer the pangs of ſeparation from her dearly-beloved family, who having of late been much forgot, now individually introduced themſelves according as affection ranked them in her ſuffering heart. From the little cabin window ſhe viewed Southampton; every riſing turret reminded her of her aunt, and the affliction ſhe had left her in; but theſe mementos ſoon vaniſhed, for the wind blew freſh, and the veſſel ſailed faſt away. But neither the daſhing waves nor reeling motion of the ſhip could engage poor Fanny's attention: ſhe was abſent heart

heart and ſoul on a flight homeward, while her lifeleſs body reſted on the cabin window; and no object preſented itſelf on the green ſea to interrupt the career of her thoughts, while ſhe reviewed the paſt current of her happy days among druid groves and hills; which had ſlid away unheeded in the garden, the play-room, and the park. She ſought alſo an aggravation of her departure in the friendly circle of her acquaintance, among whom were ſeveral that ſhe much eſteemed. She recollected too a very young gentleman who had changed countenance on the mention of her departure for Southampton; and that his mother, who was exceedingly rich, had often fondly called her her daughter. She thought on the many preſents they brought for her favourite green-houſe; and was yet on the ſunny break where it ſtood, while her huſband ſtood beſide her, ſpeaking unheard, ſo deeply was ſhe engaged at home. She haſtily

haſtily wiped away the tears before ſhe turned, and received him with a ſmile of warmth; but many daggers were in her heart, and ſhe looked adieus to England as ſhe gave her hand to be led to the great cabin to dinner. In a few weeks they arrived at their deſtined port. Fanny's error was ever before her; but ſhe loved her huſband, and determined on a dutiful part, though not ſo happy as when with her parents; for ſhe became acquainted with poverty, and now and then the caprice of her huſband, which was far different from that of her parents. Every ſcene was new; ſome diſtreſſing; but chiefly ſo when ſhe was prevented relieving the neceſſities of the poor, by a recollection that ſhe in ſome meaſure ſhared their wants; but ſhe was young and plyable to the urgent neceſſity of ſubmiſſion; and her lovely countenance bore an aſpect that ſeldom agreed with the poignant feelings of her heart.

They

They took lodgings in the port, and then the picture of an officer's wife, from her father's own prophetic tongue, revived in her memory.—'Twas of one young, poor, and beautiful, in a dirty lodging, dreſſed up in dirty gauzes, and ſurrounded with pilfering ſtrangers, who gleaned ſomewhat from her littered chamber and ſcanty wardrobe every barn play ſhe attended. "The "firſt great traits of this picture am I!" ſaid Fanny—"That, alas! cannot be—" A ſigh finiſhed the ſentence—nor was her mind capable of diſtinct thought till ſome few moments recovered her, when ſhe firmly added, "but I will realize it no "farther. Gauzes and plays I renounce "till my huſband is rich; and this lodg-"ing I will quit for any hut that ſhall "be clean and decent." But the marches of the army, which ſhe followed in great diſtreſs and anxiety for the ſafety of Vernon, prevented this plan; and for many weeks ſhe

ſhe ſlept not two nights under the ſame roof. Winter quarters at length gave her reſt, and ſome poor accommodation for the birth of her daughter Mary, the regiment being ſtationed. In the ſpring ſhe reverted to her domeſtic plan, and on inquiry heard of a houſe and ſmall allotment of land, about eight miles diſtant from the town ſhe was in, and engaging Vernon to ride that way, found in the baſon of ſome barren downs, by the ſea ſide, the little hamlet, at the end of which ſtood the deſerted houſe ſhe was directed to, ſurrounded by land once cultivated, but, ſince the war, overgrown with weeds and ſhrubs; ſcarce could the rails and houſe be diſtinguiſhed among them, nor the front gate by any means of theirs be diſentangled from the entwined ſhrubs and vines, which were once planted as the ornaments of the court. They went in the back way, through a yard containing every domeſtic conveniency neceſſary to the portion

portion of land that belonged to it. Fanny thought of the farming ſcenes in Wales, and her heart teemed with ambition to reſtore all this to order, and in rural ſcenes retrace the happineſs of her paſt days rather than ſit idle in dirty gauzes.

With the genuine warmth of an enterpriſing ſoul, Fanny ſet forth to Vernon the advantages of the place, conjuring him, as the regiment was ſtationed in the neighbourhood, to permit her to take it in hand: he objected on account of the conſequent expence; but her entreaties left him without reſiſtance, and ſhe took the place. A diſtant expedition calling Vernon on duty, ſhe removed inſtantly to Farly; where by early riſing, ardent and perſevering induſtry, ſhe ſoon changed the aſpect of the place, and two months yielded a pleaſing retreat to her welcome James, who, on his return to the garriſon, inquired at

their

their old lodgings for his wife and family, but found they were gone to live at Farly. He recollected the houſe, and on the wings of impatience reached it. The new appearance utterly ſurpriſed him; he doubted whether he was at the right place, as he knew not yet what ſpirit Fanny could exert in a good cauſe; but the ſignifications of expence which the alterations gave, ſomewhat damped his admiration; and walking ſlow and ſilent up the yard, a cheerful chattering drew his attention to a little plot behind the houſe, where ſtood Fanny and her little girl by the maid milking. Beſide them lay a large houſe-dog, whoſe protecting power Fanny was obliged to ſilence on Vernon's approach. His breaſt, already ruffled with the dread of expence, ſuffered not with patience this new irritation, but his uplifted whip rendered the dog's flight too ſwift to be overtaken, and the poultry-houſe afforded him refuge, from which immediately

mediately was heard a reſemblance to the confuſed noiſe of Babel, and the different nations iſſued forth, loudly giving ſpecimens of their various modes of utterance. "And are theſe all ours," ſaid Vernon, as they ſurrounded him. "Yes," returned Fanny, charmed with his ſurpriſe, "theſe "and many more than you ſee are become "yours."—"And pray, child, how are "they to be paid for?" ſtuttered Vernon. Fanny was ſilent; but a ſmile, ſure token that all was right, dwelt on her lovely countenance, and ſet Vernon's heart at eaſe: from her boſom ſhe drew an ancient-wrought purſe, containing the picture of her grandmother, whoſe gift of forty pounds, at the chriſtening produced all the appearances which had ſo much alarmed Vernon. Fanny took no notice of it; but the hint remained lively in her mind, and ſhe retrenched in their expences, though ſhe knew not the income Vernon poſſeſſed. She led him into the

into the houſe, impatient to diſplay the bright reſtoration of the old furniture, the new chairs ſhe had worked for the beſt parlour, and judicious views ſhe had given through the ſhrubs to the brook at the bottom of the garden, and diſtant proſpect between the opening hills:—more cannot be ſaid of Vernon than that he was content, though not apt to be ſo.

There was in the regiment to which he belonged, two of his uncles; the elder, Herod, was of a proud, yet cold diſpoſition, unleſs ſomething of ſelf was in agitation. He was ſtill in England, but by letters profeſt himſelf irreconcileable to Vernon's marriage.

The younger uncle, John, though he could not approve of his nephew's ſudden and clandeſtine match with a young ſtranger, was of too contrary a diſpoſition to withhold

hold his affection from him; and by often viſiting his little happy family, which were much employed in rural occupations, he became ſo reconciled to Fanny, that his own daughter was not more dear to him, and all the time duty permitted him to be abſent from the regiment, he ſpent at Farly; where, if a ſhower threatened the mown produce, they would all turn out to aſſiſt in Fanny's care for its preſervation, and return cheerful to a ſyllabub of her own milking, under the great tree. As John came at all hours, he would ſometimes ſurpriſe his niece with her labour-apron and blue ſtuff gown on, which though they fulfilled all the idea of cleanlineſs one ever wiſhes to be realized, called forth the rouge on Fanny's cheeks, and many excuſes about churning, morning, Saturday, or the children: but he laughed at her apologies, adding, "I wiſh I had a fortune to "recompenſe you for theſe faults, but

where

"where are your children; I will nurſe "them for you."

That Fanny was content, and wanted no addition of fortune her blooming countenance and cheerful tone gave aſſurance: but her felicity was not long to be unchecked. She obſerved her huſband in long gloomy fits, or wildly agitated while playing at cards, and ſtrangely tenacious of being aſked for money. Fanny could only wonder at it, as her little experience neither permitted her to ſpell it, or put it together, though the gameſter was ſo legible. But as Fanny could never be indifferent while Vernon was uneaſy,, ſhe reſolved to be ſtill more ſaving, though ſhe thought ſhe had been ſufficiently ſo. She turned off her maid ſervant and took a little girl, whoſe innocence and fidelity proved a laſting comfort to her. Till the ſad hour in which they parted even with this little helpmate,

mate, did Fanny manage to entertain company at dinner, in compliance to the ſhowy diſpoſition of Vernon, whoſe faſhionable ſervant and well-dreſſed groom waiting at table left no ſuſpicion of the ſcanty attendance in the kitchen, where every thing had been previouſly prepared by the hand that next courteouſly diſpenſed at the head of her table.

Sometimes at the requeſt of Vernon the company would ſtay with them a week or ten days, and then the ſun roſe not earlier than Fanny: her parlours were cleaned; her breakfaſt table ſet decked with flowers; the pies made ready for the oven; the children dreſſed, and then herſelf ready for the aſſembling company at nine o'clock, who imagined that ſhe like themſelves was juſt riſen, and had two or three maids in the kitchen. From that hour Fanny was all attendance on the ſauntering company, well

remembering

remembering her father's rule, that the leiſure and eaſe of the miſtreſs of a family was more agreeable, more accommodating to company than any exertions that deprived them of her preſence and tranquil attentions.

Vernon uſually returned to town with his gueſts, and Fanny's evening walks in the garden gave ſcope to her reflections on times paſt and preſent; but there was nothing ſhe repined at except Vernon's want of money; and conſidering herſelf, with ſome degree of concern, as a burden to his ſmall income, ſhe ſecretly worked ruffles, handkerchiefs, &c. which the little Patty uſed to ſell in the town, and procure in return ſome decorations for her houſe or garden, and which the dear remembrance of her green-houſe in England had given her a great inclination to poſſeſs.

But

But even in a good courſe there is a moderate pace to purſue, and an early period to ſlacken at, leſt by advancing too rapidly they ſhould paſs beyond it.—Fanny's evil genius, foreſeeing the conſequent proſperity ariſing from induſtrious virtue, had long endeavoured to divert her from them, but finding it in vain, at length turned them againſt her, by rendering her too eager in the purſuit. She became ſo abſorbed in profitable works and economical attentions, that even the dear partner of her heart, for whoſe happineſs and welfare all her labours were calculated, was ſometimes forgot, and experienced that ~~regret~~ neglect which a newly-biaſſed mind unconſciouſly is guilty of to its once dearer object.

In a pleaſant cloſet by her chamber window, Fanny had fixed a frame, and meeting with a cheap French ſilk, painted from ſome drawings of Vernon's a beautiful pat-

tern to work it by. The grateful task, which she expected much profit from, once begun, led her quite away. The pleasantness of the work, and beautiful flowers upon it, hiding the snare, she was for ever missing; no longer ready to promote their fishing parties, which had been frequent, nor attend Vernon in his idle saunters round the grounds; and when the great, the superior, the stern mind of man wished to stay at home, and mentioned the necessity of going, that his wife might by entreaties persuade him to stay, the soothing custom was missed, and she advised him by all means to attend his duty, that she might in secret attend what she thought hers.

When Fanny was absent from the frame, Patty, who entered heartily into all her mistress's schemes, supplied her place, and Vernon's servant began to complain of there being

being no maid kept, and the girl always out or the way.

Vernon alſo became diſcontented—he knew not why, for Fanny left him nothing apparently to be complained of, and his diſcontent, though due, was unreaſonably vented on Fanny; while ſhe, animated with the hope of preſenting him with ten bright guineas for her work, chaſed away all intruding ſorrows on that account, and continued cheerfully ſlaving in an error, till the ſeaſons changed. Winter being come, Vernon's diſpoſition, little correſponding with his purſe, inclined him to keep up the old Britiſh cuſtom of a merry Chriſtmas; the ſuperior officers and their wives were invited to ſpend that time with them. Fanny's deſire of ſaving was yet in the erroneous; ſhe would not ſend for a helping woman, but encouraged William, and aſſiſted Patty.

Fanny had no pretenſions to wit or learning, but the ſimplicity, love, and ſincerity of a child dictated every word ſhe uttered, and rendered her opinions more intereſting than much wiſer people; for they were never biaſſed by paſſion or conceit: and the door ſhutting on Fanny gave a moment of regret to every remaining perſon in the room; for ſhe was the umpire of all cavillers: her ſerene countenance equally with her calm diſpoſition ſettled the diſpute.

Scarce could ſhe find time to give directions to Patty how to proceed; for Vernon was as petulant with her for her abſence as the others were ſilently diſpleaſed, till he obſerved a certain attention to her from one of the officers, which made him wiſh her leſs handſome, or that her beauty might be viſible only to his ſight.

That

That ſame night Vernon awoke from a ſound ſleep, which the gloom of his new-fraught mind had facilitated, and found not Fanny; he called, but received no anſwer. A thouſand concurring circumſtances ruſhed on his mind: he aroſe, and, ſeizing his ſword, jealouſy and fury led him through all the paſſages of the houſe, without knowing where to ſtop, till a diſtant noiſe drew him below ſtairs to the parlour door, through the key-hole of which he plainly perceived a light, and tremblingly throwing it open ſaw his wife on her knees ſcrubbing the hearth; he went to her and laughingly confeſſed the truth, but enquired with concern the meaning of her ſtrange employment. "I do it, my dear James, "that you may have no heart-aches from "the want of money, which, though you "would not pain me with the knowledge "of, I have found out is not ſo plentiful "with you as I could wiſh." His ac-

knowledgments to her were great, as they were due; but he reminded her of the misery and ſhame he ſhould ſuffer if any of his acquaintance ſhould ſurpriſe her at ſuch work. "I too," ſaid ſhe, "ſhould be "ſorry for your ſake, but not for my own; "for if, by reducing your expences, it "makes you eaſier, it is my glory and happineſs."

Fanny's good qualities were not latent, but ſo eaſily brought into action, and her beſt endeavours for Vernon's intereſt ſuch certain poſſeſſions, that he knew not the value of them, and returned to town with the company, chewing the bitter end of poverty, forgetful of Fanny's reconciling qualities, which had firſt awakened him to the contemplation of his poor proſpect.

Vernon's mind was in this ſtate, when the worſt-fraught wind that ever blew brought

brought his elder uncle, Herod, to join his regiment. He viewed his nephew with the eye of a diſhonoured relation, told him his coat was ſhabby, and his whole appearance ſo different from what it was when a ſingle man, that he was aſhamed of him, and doubted not that himſelf, aged as he was, would be the moſt acceptable to the ladies, and failed not, at every poſſible opportunity to reiterate inſinuations diſgraceful to Fanny, though ſhe was not immediately mentioned, but her happineſs was obliquely aimed at, and at laſt reached; for Vernon had been brought up by his uncle, and ſo accuſtomed to liſten to him as an oracle, that he felt his own principles and inclinations weak before ſo determined a perſon.

Herod, well acquainted with his nephew's diſpoſition, and alone capable of working the change he intended in it, proceeded by placing his way of life in a moſt

deſpicable light, his perſon in a very flattering one, and poor Fanny as truly ignominious. Vernon could not defend her, being ſo totally ignorant of her life before they met, yet thought, if ever truth and innocence were perfectly poſſeſſed, it was by Fanny. Till attached by her virtues and lovely perſon, Vernon's ruling paſſion had been ambition, and by the management of his uncle he reverted to it again; for Vernon, by liſtening in ſilence, became eaſily acceſſible to his uncle's favourite theme; and in time it had an effect on him which he was little aware of. Herod perceived it, and advancing more openly, aſked him, if he could not deviſe ſome cauſe of divorce, adding, that a young woman picked up under age, and her parent unknown, never need have been owned as a wife. This encouraged Vernon to confeſs what never yet had paſſed his lips, that the perſon who married them was not

a clergy-

a clergyman; but that it was not done with a deſign of taking any advantage of Fanny, but becauſe the clergyman on land refuſed to marry ſo young a perſon:—he had no other method of obtaining her:—and beſought his uncle not to think of deceiving her farther, but immediately permit their marriage to be compleated. But finding this received with contempt and ſcorn, ſimply requeſted that Fanny might never be acquainted with her falſe marriage, as it ſhould for ever ſtand good with him. The cunning deſigner did not, at this period, contradict him, promiſing himſelf better effects from time; and left Vernon, obſerving, that the woman muſt have managed him finely, ſince he was ſo much afraid of letting her know the truth of her ſituation, but that henceforward he muſt do as he pleaſed. Vernon, thus apparently flung on himſelf, and no ſpirits of oppoſition raiſed by his uncle's laſt words, remained

ruminating without any fixed diſpoſition or object, till the taunt of Fanny's managing him recurred; and as he felt the ſtrongeſt reluctance to let her know of the deceit, took his uncle's word, and imagined himſelf afraid of a termagant woman, when a little more candid inſight would have found it was virtue he ſtood in awe of: her ſevere eye never dwelt with his wife, and he ſhrunk from being expoſed to it.

Herod, elated with his laſt intelligence, indulged himſelf in ſchemes of advancement for his nephew. He knew that if the moſt accompliſhed woman of large fortune was at that time propoſed to him, he would refuſe her, but that both his ambition and wiſhes might be raiſed to gain ſuch a prize; and Herod already had one in his view on whom his intentions were at work, a woman who dancing at an aſſembly had ſaid pretty loud, that Vernon was a ſweet fellow.

low. This lady was not early mentioned to Vernon, but ſeveral others were, by way of preparation, and to whom Herod knew he would take a diſlike inſtantly; while he thundered poverty in his ear one moment, and the next poured in the charming means of avoiding it:—"Marry, if you ever "can compaſs ſo fortunate an event, ſome "rich, ſome young, ſome beautiful heireſs. "Miſs Clans, I hear, thinks you a ſingle "man; who knows but her tender heart "(diſintereſted as it muſt be from her for- "tune) might be induced to accept of "yours, as a tribute due to its firſt-raiſed "ſoft affection; but you are loſt, ſunk "from your family to the low pitch of "contented poverty, and a hen-pecked "keeper. Here take theſe ten guineas; "drink brave inſpiring liquor; ſee not my "face under a bottle a-day. Here is "t'other ten to buy yourſelf a coat; and "you may ſend to my ſtable for horſes."

In a few weeks the exhilarating preſcription had the deſired effect: Vernon proclaimed himſelf a ſingle man, and Miſs Clans' admirer.

Fanny, only eight miles diſtant, remained ignorant of all theſe tranſactions, while her falſe marriage was making its way into every family, in the ſhape of a ſecret; but the news, far from giving that triumph which ſcandal uſually does, ſometimes died on the reporter's tongue; for the wicked, from a ſecret knowledge, felt that ſhe was not of their link, and the good could not bear to part with her. But a lady, who even the world could not with certainty adjudge to either of the above deſcriptions, now iſſued from a long reſtraint the champion of Fanny's guilt, not that ſhe diſliked her herſelf, but becauſe a friend of hers, whom ſhe wiſhed to lower, ſupported Fanny's cauſe, and had been intimate with

her when in the town. By the firſt-mentioned lady Fanny's example had been long felt as a reproach, and in return her domeſtic fruagalities were now to be turned into proofs againſt her. " For certainly," ſaid this good lady, " no married woman would " have been kept in that private manner; " ſhe has not been to any public diverſions " ſince ſhe came to America."—" Oh " you are very right, Madam," replied another married lady, who long time had laboured through the odium of a few certainties; " you are very right, Madam; " no virtuous woman would do it. Be- " ſides, I had a ſervant of hers with me an " hour or two the other day, and ſhe gave " me ſuch a very ridiculous account of her " manner of ſpending her time, that I " gueſſed no other than what is now con- " firmed to us; ſhe was very much with " the poor people of the place, ſpending " ſometimes an hour in their cottages,

which

" which ſhews ſhe muſt have been low-
" lived: and mighty religious too; a great
" prayer I find;—you know I always had
" a bad opinion of ſo much ſanctification:
" it is ſuch hypocriſy! you and I was
" brought up in liberal opinions, and my
" children ſhall receive the ſame; but this
" poor young creature has certainly had a
" very low education;—I pity her very
" much."—" I cannot think it, Madam,"
ſaid the Colonel's wife; " that is, I cannot
" think ſhe has had a low education; for
" I have had the pleaſure of ſpending ſome
" time with her, and never was gueſt ſo
" genteely treated;—my days were hours,
" and weeks days with her. I have talked
" with her on many ſubjects, and thought
" ſhe had a mind the moſt innocently en-
" lightened I ever met with, and if ſhe has
" not had a ſuperior education, ſhe cer-
" tainly has ſpent her time with thoſe who
" have, and has reaped all the benefit:

nor

" nor can I believe that that ſweet counte-
" nance can be animated by guilt." His uncle John's feelings and ſenſibility were greatly wounded by thoſe malignant rumours:—he knew he had not power to encounter Herod's long-concerted plan, with that degree of oppoſition which might enſure ſucceſs, and determined to withdraw himſelf from ſo diſtreſſing a ſcene as it promiſed to produce, wiſhing firſt to take leave of Farly, where ſuch cheerful days had paſt, as ſome forebodings warned him he ſhould never experience again; but he could not perſuade himſelf to be the firſt announcer to Fanny of her misfortunes; but his clothes were there, and when on the point of ſending for them, he recollected ſome papers of conſequence in Fanny's care, and deſirous of ſeeing her once more, thought it wrong to truſt them to a ſervant, and determined to go himſelf. Fanny had finiſhed the embroidery, and ſold it be-

yond

yond her hopes, and not alarmed at Vernon's long abſence, which the traverſes of a regiment often cauſed, had been paying off little mortifying debts, and purchaſing decorations for the houſe and garden, particularly a green bench for the deep part of the brook, where Vernon, ſtanding behind ſome alders, uſed to fiſh, and had often wiſhed for ſuch an accommodation; every thing was in readineſs, and Fanny impatiently waiting for him to come and approve them, when the bell rang and regimentals were ſeen through the rails and trees, ſhe ran herſelf to open the gate, and glancing over uncle John, looked up as to the face of Vernon, not doubting that he followed, then out of the gate, up and down, but there was no Vernon; her enquiries after him were made with tears in her eyes; but being aſſured that he was extremely engaged with the regiment, and well, ſhe ſuffered the raptures of the children at ſight of uncle

John

John to recal her to ſerenity and cheerfulneſs. They led him into the houſe, where every thing that could teſtify their pleaſure and his welcome was ſet before him. They had a hundred things to tell him while his refreſhment laſted: their queſtions were not quite ſo happy, and John, to avoid them, as they all related to Vernon, ſoon left the table, and deſired to ſee the alterations and purchaſes, when Fanny again diſtreſſed him, by aſking at every one, how he thought Vernon would like them.

Time glided away, while John from minute to minute delayed telling them that he was to return that night, and night came ere his heart was prepared to hear the little ſorrows of the children for his departure, or give the alarm to Fanny by taking away his clothes. The hard taſk out of ſeaſon, ſuſpence vaniſhed, and he ſunk eaſily into his elbow chair, enjoying ſupper, chat, and

lively

lively innocence; but in the night it occurred to him, that it was treacherous to be under the ſame roof with Fanny, and not apprize her of the ſad ſituation ſhe was in. The thought worried him till day break, when he roſe, took his papers, and, ordering his man to pack up his clothes, ſet out for town.

Vernon's progreſs in the new lady's affections were rapid; and her relations began to look forward to ſettlements, and informed him it was high time to turn off the woman he kept. Woman I keep! repeated he ſternly; but added that ſhe ſhould be wrote to. "That is not ſuffi-
"cient for us," ſaid the careful friends;
"we muſt ſee her fairly diſmiſſed; and,
"as it muſt be a troubleſome affair to you,
"we will take it on ourſelves, if you
"will only write her a note to ſignify that
"what we do is according to your will.

"Your

" Your uncle John has ſettled 20l. per " annum on her."—" I thank him," ſaid Vernon, and in a hand ſcarce legible wrote, that he added twenty to it, and deſired that any requeſt ſhe made might be complied with. But when Miſs Clans' relations enquired who was to go with them on the part of Vernon, to inform Fanny of the new arrangement, no executioner was ever found with more difficulty. Herod declined it, becauſe he was unacquainted with her: John abſolutely refuſed, and Vernon's friend, young Hamilton, whoſe courage and generoſity had hitherto proved ſuperior to every trial, now, with evident depreſſion of ſpirits, begged to be excuſed. He had never ſeen Fanny, but the worth of her character and the compaſſion due to her he had read in every agitated countenance that debated on her caſe. Herod ſeeing the reluctance of Hamilton and John, propoſed their both going, promiſing

miſing then to attend them himſelf, and ſucceeded in forming a troop to encounter Fanny, and Vernon wrote her a formal note, aſſuring her ſhe might rely on what the bearers acquainted her with, and that her annuity ſhould be punctually paid.

The account of their reception will beſt be ſeen in the younger uncle John's letter to Vernon, which follows.

DEAR JAMES,

" Why was I choſe, why was I forced,
" to act in this affair which leaves me ſick
" at heart? Thirty years in the army
" never produced me ſo cruel a taſk: it
" was like murdering in cold blood. In
" the ſtill of the evening we approached
" your hamlet: we had been all ſilent for
" ſome miles, when young Hamilton, ob-
" ſerving ſomething like a pillar on the
" down which hides your Fanny's houſe

" from

" from the eaſtern road, aſked me if it
" was a ſea-mark, or to hang a light or
" ſignal on to our coaſting veſſels. I did
" not recollect any ſuch, but as it was the
" only object ariſing on thoſe barren hills,
" and the ſun ſetting beyond it, it was con-
" ſpicuous in the red horizon, and became
" the object of our attention; we aſked a
" labourer returning from his work what
" it was? ' 'Tis a woman,' he replied,
' who ſtands there every evening looking
' this road for her huſband, and I dare ſay
' takes ſome of you for him; for ſhe was
' ſtanding ſtill looking this way as I came
' over the down.' " It was as the man
" ſaid; for when we came to that part of
" the road which lay along the bottom of
" the down, Fanny was ſtanding beſide it,
" waiting for you, James. She leaned
" forward, looked earneſtly at us as we
" paſſed, while I muffled up my face in
" my handkerchief, that ſhe might not
" know

" know me, Herod having desired, as we
" drew near, that we would not make our-
" selves known that night, moved, I be-
" lieve, by the compassionate reflections
" young Hamilton made on her situation
" while viewing her lonely figure on the
" high downs. They being unknown to
" her, took as good a view of her as the
" light would permit. She wiped her
" eyes to see clearer; but sought in vain,
" and turned off disconsolate to the downs
" again. Hamilton ceased not his lamen-
" tations for her fate, and encomiums on
" the beauty of her figure, till sorrow or
" shame for a few rising sighs stopped his
" voice: but he is so young that such
" weakness is pardonable. Even Herod
" said—and he said it most feelingly—as
" she turned down a little path that leads
" to the sea, Poor Woman! Hamilton
" watched her till she was lost in the wind-
" ings of the valley; but uttered not a

" word

" word more. We waited on her next
" morning:—How painful was my ap-
" proach to our little charming dwelling!
" —The ſhrubbery in the court is in greater
" perfection than I could have expected;
" rather overgrown. Never did the night-
" mare in the moſt hideous dream weigh
" heavier on forced ſteps than reluctance
" did on mine; and, conſcious of the
" wounds they were to give, each of my
" companions endeavouring to be laſt, a
" mutual ſtand took place, ſome few paces
" before the Houſe. I could not ſee her at
" the windows, and my hand ſo trembled
" that I could ſcarcely open the door; we
" entered, and I dreaded the opening of
" the parlour door on either ſide; and
" Herod ſaw it, and advancing ſternly,
" threw them open, one after the other.
" There was no body there. He viewed
" the neatneſs of the little palace, and ſaw
" hanging up in the hall your hat and

" great

" great coat. We walked over the lower
" part of the houſe: it was a bright morn-
" ing, and every room was pleaſant. From
" the back parlour window we ſaw Fanny
" at breakfaſt in the garden, with Polly
" and little James, two children of the
" village, and her maid Patty. We went
" round by the hedge, and came upon
" them unperceived. She looked ſerenely
" mild, as the clear morning that had in
" ſome meaſure chaſed away the ſad re-
" grets of the preceding evening. She had
" on her blue gown that you, James, uſed
" to admire her ſo much in. Her ſmooth
" hair and neat cap were tied with a rib-
" band of the ſame colour:—Why do
" women ſo fair as ſhe wear any other? It
" was ſuitable to the colour of her veins,
" and the blue white of her ſkin. And
" though penſive reflection has a little ſub-
" dued the freſheſt cheek that ever bloom-
" ed, it has not yet eraſed the dimples,

" which

" which were fully ſhewn at our recep-
" tion; and a deep return of colour graced
" the firſt mention of your name. But
" ſhe received our poignant news with the
" calm fortitude of a truly righteous wo-
" man: her eyes indeed loſt their luſtre,
" and her colour ſunk; but out of civility
" ſhe would ſmile on us, for ſhe ſaw we
" pitied her; and you might have thought
" ſhe ſaid as ſhe ſmiled, it is only me that
" is wounded.

" But well as I love Fanny, I was not ſo
" much intereſted for her till ſhe ſpoke of
" you: it was without reproach; but
" every time your name was pronounced,
" ſhe looked earneſtly, and aſked, forget-
" ting ſhe had aſked it before, whether
" what we had told her was quite true.—
" We gave her your note.

" I have lived in ſcenes of miſery and
" death, in war, in priſon, and an hoſpital,
" but never knew keen ſorrow and diſtreſs
" before. I have ſeen wretches brave and
" ſink under their fate, but never before
" ſaw delicacy and ſenſibility ſupport it.
" Nor can I ever recover from the painful
" ſenſation ſhe has fixed in my mind; for
" the recollection, which is ever intruding,
" is as bitter as the real moment was, when
" gently claſping her hands together, ſhe
" ſuppreſſed her tears, and with trembling
" lips pronounced," ' If it is ſo true, and
' he will not marry me again, but that
' other lady; that is, if James deſerts me
' and our little ones, yet I think I may
' with ſome confidence look up to Heaven
' for conſolation, as I never conſciouſly
' did wrong, but in leaving my father and
' mother, to ſhare dangers with him who
' has ſo amply puniſhed me for it, and
' now,' " continued ſhe, dropping her
" hands,"

" hands," ' poor, dear man! he is led ' aſtray himſelf by a fortune, which will ' prove as deluſive to him as he has been ' cruel to me.—We muſt all part then,' " ſaid ſhe, riſing," ' except me and theſe ' little partners in miſery." " When her " eyes reſted on her children the tears " would flow; but ſhe recovered herſelf, " and they ſuddenly ceaſed to flow:—this " eaſe to her anguiſh was reſerved for thoſe " miſerable ſolitary hours when it could " pain no one but herſelf; and this hard " taſk I fear ſhe learnt too well to practiſe " in your company.—

" Nephew muſt I call you?—Yes, I now " addreſs you as ſuch, my deareſt friend; " for has not many obligations paſſed be- " tween us? remember I ſpeak to you now " as if I was really going to part with you " for ever, on the brink of eternal puniſh- " ment; for ſecret remorſe will overtake

" you in this world, and divine vengeance
" in the next, for injury to ſo innocent,
" ſo deceived, ſo helpleſs a creature as
" Fanny.—You and I muſt never ſpeak
" again, if ſhe is deſerted: you have ad-
" viſing Herod to apply to, and I ſhall
" ſell out of the regiment to avoid you
" both. As for Fanny, I know not what
" will become of her; your ſettlement
" ſhe calmly returned, ſaying, ſhe ſtill
" eſteemed herſelf too much to accept the
" wages of ſin.

" At our departure ſhe carneſtly preſ-
" ſed us to take ſome refreſhment; and
" applied to Herod, as the moſt inflexible,
" with a humble courteſy and ſmile; ſo
" ſweet that it expreſſed his welcome clear-
" ly, and diſcovered a moſt beautiful ſet
" of teeth. He refuſed her; but Ha-
" milton took ſomething from the chil-
" dren, and eat it as we took our leave.

" She

" She looked at me as if ſhe thought I " ſhould ſtay behind; but I could not. " The two following days I called; but " ſhe was ill, Patty ſaid, too ill to ſee any " body. I paſſed the houſe many times; " her chamber windows were ſhut; and I " but too much participating the miſery " that was ſuffering in that dark chamber, " ſet out for your quarters, and, finding " you gone, I diſpatch this after you, in " hopes to recall you to the duties of hu- " manity."

Fanny was exceedingly alarmed at the news, though not convinced of its truth; and ſhe loved Vernon too well to believe he could love her ſo little, and anxiouſly waited for him to come and unravel the myſtery himſelf; but her evil genius was predominant; and many days paſſed; every one weakening her hopes, and encreaſing her deſires. Early in the mornings ſhe

walked over the cliffs and high downs, to ſee if he was coming; then, returning to the children, and, the buſineſs of the day over again, in that hope ſhe led them forth to the ſugar-loaf mountain, on which ſhe had raiſed a ſeat that over-looked the northern road, and there ſat like patient Expectation, till night darkly ſhaded all hope, and returning melancholy with the children, ſhe ſuppreſſed every emotion of grief till they were in bed, and then flying her once-loved garden, repaired to a walk by the ſea-ſide, where ſhe might give free vent to ſorrows due to the diſappointments of the day; here, pacing the beach, or ſitting on the rocks, till the moon declined, or the tide drove her away, ſhe aſſented to all the reproaches of her conſcience, which now became more ſevere than ſhe could well ſuſtain.—"It is true," ſaid ſhe, "I "am now obnoxious to the world; yet on "the world muſt I depend; for I was a "deſerter

" deſerter of parents, therefore become an
" orphan.—I loved Vernon; therefore he,
" not death, has reduced me to a ſtate of
" widowhood.—I have two children—
" pitying Heaven! receive them: then
" might I ruſh into theſe rolling waves,
" and end at once my miſery and ſhame;
" for Vernon will return no more to guide
" the child he taught to ſtray from home."

The fear of Heaven, not of her life, made her recede from the approaching tide; and the concave of the high rocks was her next reſort. The rays of the moon were excluded, but the ſweep of the winds penetrated the hollows, and, joining her plaints, aggravated her woe, and was ſometimes liſtened to as the denouncing voice of offending parents. When the nights were far ſpent, and fatigue and ſorrow had ſubdued the vigour of her reaſon, ſhe thought they might be dead, and now

inhabit that ſad place, which was rendered more ſo by her moans than howlings of the wind—The chimera grew upon her, and the cave became dear and ſacred to her. Every night ſhe entered it, ſometimes aſking if the balm of forgiveneſs awaited her, or if the miſery of her ſituation did not yet exceed the greatneſs of her fault? forming an anſwer from her mother in the loweſt ſigh of the wind; while, if from another corner it aroſe louder, it was trembled at as her father's. Scarce could ſhe tear herſelf from their imagined abode till day-light, though every ſucceeding morning, ſhort as her reſt had been, awakened her to a ſenſe of her error. She knew ſhe was ſeeking comfort in deluſion, and, at length, as a hard duty, paſſed by the mouth of the cave.

Freed from ſo fantaſtic an error, her mind regained its ſtability; and, after ſome reflection,

reflection, ſhe proceeded to act ſtill more heroically, and gave up, though with bitter pangs, all chance of ſeeing Vernon again. "I will repreſs my fondeſt hopes "of his return,—wiſh for it no more," ſaid ſhe, "but in time extricate myſelf "from my ſhameful ſituation. My little "ones too ſhall go with me, though I "have no ſhelter to take them to."

Her reſolutions taken, with never-ceaſing ſighs and tears ſhe packed up what neceſſaries were moſt portable, as ſhe intended carrying them herſelf. Her purſe not affording any conveyance, ſhe determined to walk to the firſt port where the ſhips ſet out for England: it was only eighteen miles diſtant;—ſhe thought ſhe could do it in two days, taking a guide through the woods, who was to carry the youngeſt child, about a year old.

The morning appointed for her departure arrives; the guide ſtands at the door with his ſtaff in his hand; and Fanny delivers to him her child and a bundle, and then going up ſtairs into her ſolitary chambers, ſhut all the windows, and taking down their ſtraw hats, which had grown old on the pegs to which they were never more to be returned, ſhe ſhut up the door of the comfortleſs houſe, and left it a monument of her miſery to all the ruſtick lookers on, who cheriſhed her memory, and lamented her ſad departure, though they knew not the cauſe, as ſhe never divulged it. Taking Polly by the hand, ſhe went to the door of a poor hut, whoſe family had received its daily ſuſtenance from her houſe, and giving in the key, could only ſay, "Farewell, good old woman; I "am going to my native country: if Mr. "Vernon ever enquires for me, there is a "letter for him in the houſe." Here her paſſions

paſſions riſing high, ſhe immediately turned off, without waiting for a reply, and, taking little Polly by the hand, followed the guide ſome miles without uttering a ſyllable, till fatigue made the child ſink. This awakened Fanny for a moment, and taking the child up in her arms, held her comfortably in them, where ſleep ſoon lulled her to equal ſilence with her mother; and ſix miles more were traverſed in the ſame ſilence, as the guide's little care was aſleep too, and he trudging on with the view only of earning his ſhilling. Towards the afternoon ſome ſteep rocks bounded the proſpect; having mounted theſe, over many a craggy ſtep, an extenſive view of the ſea lay about ſeven miles to the right. The guide turning round for the firſt time, pointed out to her at the foot of the rocks, and beginning of the foreſt, a little hovel, the only human dwelling between the hamlet ſhe had left and the town ſhe was going to. "I

" am to go no farther than that," ſaid the guide; and then gave her inſtructions how to proceed in the foreſt, as far as the trees and even land would permit them to ſee. She deſired him to proceed; and, as ſoon as her back was turned, feeling herſelf as much alone as if with a brute, ſhe looked unto the ſea, which bore her hither, and reached even unto her father and mother's land, and in an agony of grief called out on their names. She looked back alſo, before ſhe deſcended the other ſide of the rocks, towards the little dwelling ſhe had juſt left.—Vernon's idea was there, and his thrice repeated name burſt from her heaving heart. Having followed the intricate windings of the rocky paths, which the guide alone knew how to trace, they reached, (by ways which at firſt appeared to lead from it) the little hut: where, having eat ſome bread and milk altogether, the guide gave her freſh inſtruction for her journey,

and

and returned back the ſame night. The children were ſleepy, and Fanny aſked for a bed, but was told there was but one ſpare one in the houſe, and that was beſpoke by ſome gentlemen who were hunting in the foreſt; but that there was a chamber with ſome dried reeds and flags in it. "That will do for us," ſaid Fanny; "let "me ſee it." The room had nothing elſe in it, and no caſement to the window; but a large tree ſhaded it from the ſun. Fanny ſpread the flags, laid down the children, and then kneeling, wept and prayed over them, till fatigue and grief weighed her down, and ſhe ſoon ſlept by them.

The hunters returned; and while their repaſt was preparing, one of them paſſing up ſtairs, leant his hand againſt the ruſh door of the chamber; it opened, and the ſleeping trio ſtruck him motionleſs.—Traces of tears were yet on Fanny's cheeks, and

ſo

ſo deep a colour on little Fanny's, that a dangerous fever was evident; the little boy alone ſlept lovely and ſerene on his mother's arm. The hunter wiſhed to know the cauſe of thoſe tears, and ſtood in contemplation over them, with all the money he had about him collected from every pocket, in his hand: he gently laid it in Fanny's hand, and then retired, with an intention of having an account of them from the woman of the houſe; but dinner being ſerved, and the ſucceeding liquor overpowering humanity and memory, the tears of Fanny did not occur to the beſt of hearts till next morning, when ſhe was already departed and four hours on her journey. The woman of the houſe could give no account of her; but ſaid, that ſoon after her departure, ſhe found ſome guineas ſcattered in the ruſhes upon which they had ſlept; that ſhe went after them, but of the many paths which led into the foreſt they could not

not find which ſhe had followed, and the ſearch had proved entirely fruitleſs.

The miſerable traveller had riſen up in the cool of the morning, and, tying ſome bundles to her apron-ſtring, thought, by that method, and great exertions of her ſtrength, to get through the remainder of her journey, in which the churliſh guide had refuſed farther to accompany her.

The boy on her arm, a ſilk work-bag, full of bread, in her hand, and Polly hanging on the other, ſhe ſet out according to the inſtructions which the guide had given.

It was but two miles from the rocks to the port, and ſhe was a tolerably good walker; but her maternal fondneſs had occaſioned a reliance too much on her own ſtrength; for ſhe intended, in addition to the fatigues of the other luggage, to carry

the

the little girl ſometimes, to reſt her; but as the ſun aroſe higher the heat became exceſſive, and ſhe was obliged to follow the path of the ſummer travellers, which lay winding along the ſhade, and was much more round about than the winter road, which was ſtraight, and more beaten, for ſome miles from the waſte hovel, but as ſhe advanced deeper into the foreſt, the tracks of human feet became leſs and leſs apparent. About noon the the air was ſtill and hot, and the beams of the ſun dazzled on the bright under-wood, and pained her already aching ſight.—She wiped her eyes, and thought it was tears alone that dimmed them. During the heat the air was perfectly motionleſs; no tranſient breath lifted the higheſt leaf; and the buz of flies became the chief noiſe of the woods, ſave now and then the ſudden riſe of large birds, which her ſilent approach did not alarm from their ſhady covert, till ſhe almoſt

approached

approached them; but while ſhe watched their flight with anxious fear, her feet became entangled in the briars, and ſhe again reſigned herſelf to that conſtant look on the ground which is ſo inducing a friend to melancholy thought:—She fell into it, and miſtook her way; for inſtinctively, or without a thought, ſhe followed the moſt beaten of two paths that branched from the road ſhe had hitherto followed, (forgetting that the guide had told her to keep to the left) it led to a ſpring, and there ended; but many little ſtraggling paths led up to the brow of the hill, at the foot of which the ſpring was ſituated. She followed one them, and found the top and ſides covered with a low ſhrub, bearing rich-looking berries; but thought was her only food, though ſhe diſturbed flights of ſmall birds that were regaling themſelves much more happily with the fruit and their reſponſive notes. The contraſt ſtruck her, but ſhe

dwelt

dwelt not on it; for her heavy-laden mind refuſed the mixture of plaintive envy with real woes, and ſhe looked forward from the eminence for ſome new direction towards her journey's end. The wildeſt ſcenes that ever drew tears from a loſt traveller now lay before her, and no trace of any human path preſented itſelf.—Her reſolution was now called forth by reaſon, and ſhe determined on a vigorous exertion; and, ſetting out without a path, ſhe inclined to the left, in order to fall into her right road, rather than return the long tedious miles ſhe had come. She then paſſed over ſands, ſometimes like the downs in England, then covered with trees, or a low under-wood and briars, almoſt impaſſable; down the ſide of ſteep hills, which ſhe was obliged to deſcend, in a continual dread every moment of loſing her foot-hold; and then again immediately neceſſitated to aſcend the oppoſite ſide, rather than make a long

a long ſtretch round for a more level way. Her ancles were torn, her feet pierced and bleeding, and her heart nearly broken, when ſhe perceived very alarming ſymptoms of fever in her eldeſt child.—She inceſſantly called for drink; there was no hopes of any from the dry appearance of the place; and the bewildered and thirſty parent had no friendly clue to guide her back to the ſpring; but found ſhe was croſſing little paths that led on to the wood on the right.—She knew that was contrary to her directions, and paſſed on, till one more broad than the reſt, tempted her to hope that it led to ſome human dwelling, and, entering the thick foliage which met over the path, was ſometimes obliged to part the entangled boughs with her hands, though the under-way encreaſed in breadth as ſhe advanced, but ſeemed to have been much more trod formerly than lately; for the excluded Indians had long ceaſed to range

theſe

theſe their native woods; nor were their traces deſcernible but by luckleſs arrows lying on the ground, or ſtill remaining in the wounded trees. Fanny found ſhe was going down hill; the ſhade became darker; a deeper verdure died the leaves, and, where the ſun checkered in, the earth appeared covered with moſs; a dampneſs alſo, and ſome alders beſpoke the near affinity of water. She deſcended deep before ſhe reached it, ſometimes liſtening to hear its rill; then hopeleſs, though chilled with its vapours, and near plunging in before ſhe diſcovered it. It was half encircled with a natural grotto, and high rocks roſe beyond it on the oppoſite ſide, from whence the water iſſued deep, ſlow, and clear. She haſted with the little mug and relieved the child's drought; then, ſinking on her knees for a moment's reſt, with the untaſted draught in her hand, explored the vaulted ciſtern, and retired majeſty of the place. She looked

looked up to moſs-covered entrances into the ſecret chambers of the rock, but durſt not even in thought aſcend the craggy ſteps that led to them, leſt wild beaſts or other dangerous animals ſhould iſſue from the myſterious haunt.

She drank; and then ſought to return back: but, among the many paths which led to this place, which was the fountain of the foreſt, ſhe could not diſtinguiſh that by which ſhe came: and fear and apprehenſion, from its awfulneſs, had ſtrangely impreſſed her with a deſire of quitting a place, which, though it had yielded her relief, had filled her with dread and great agitation of mind:—but the velvet moſs remained unpreſſed, and Fanny followed a wrong path. She knew it not; but flattering herſelf ſhe was right, liſtened with awakened tenderneſs to the laughing raptures of the boy, at the ſight of the mouſe-deer,

deer, glancing acroſs their path and bounding in diſtant views. Fanny fed him with rich gums from trees, the fruit of which grew too high for her to reach; but ſhe forgot the firſt paſſage of the hours, and never-ceaſing courſe of the ſun, keeping him nearly in the point of view ſhe had ſet out with in the morning, which brought her in a curve from her proper courſe. She was impatient to ſee the ſea, as keeping that to her right was now the only part of the directions that ſhe remembered, and ſhe was not without hopes of getting a ſight of it, as the ground was very uneven, but ſhe had many breaks in the earth to avoid, and thick clumps of trees to paſs, which ſhe durſt not ſtep over, but walked half-way round to get on the other ſide.—At length ſhe gained an eminence, and ſaw the ſea, her expected guide: ſhe then thought of reſt; and ſitting down, as ſhe always did, with her face towards it, laid the chil-

dren

dren to ſleep acroſs her lap, and, leaning her elbow on the earth, reſted her head on her hand, while her eye paſſed along the uneven cliffs to the fartheſt ſtretch of land which ſhe thought pointed towards England.—" Happy, happy land," cried ſhe, " where no one can be loſt, but thoſe who " chooſe to go aſtray; where rewards " await ſufferings; where love flows to " the good, and friends ſurround the dy- " ing."

The hour of reſt and unburthening lamentation being ſpent, ſhe aroſe to purſue her journey, when a ſmall animal that lay a few paces behind her ſkipped away, but turned again, and, wagging his tail with the apparent deſire of conciliating, ſtood looking at Fanny for leave to approach. She gueſſed that it was a European dog which had been loſt in the woods, and run wild. But, at the ſame moment that her heart

heart accorded with his petition, her evil genius influenced her to raiſe her hand and frighten him away, ſuggeſting that he might be mad and hurt the children. All hopes of friendſhip were at once checked in the poor dog, and, drooping, he ſkulked back towards the woods, turning once again for about half a minute, ſurveying Fanny with piteous looks for a recal; but ſhe perſiſted in frightening him away: and then, marking the way ſhe intended going, walked on, wondering at her own cruelty in refuſing ſociety to the forlorn little creature that had ſo evidently deſired it, and whoſe looks had ſaid, "I will love you; I will be faithful if you will but admit me."—The more ſhe thought of him, the more her compaſſion was awakened, and ſhe often looked round in hopes of ſeeing him again; but the dog, which had long followed her unſeen, before ſhe repulſed him, then gave up the purſuit, and ſhe ſaw him no more.

Having

Having reached a more riſing ground than the firſt, ſhe found ſhe was too near the ſea, and, ſlanting from it, deſcended low into the woods, where the ſhade and fruit refreſhed her, while ſweet hope led her on with both children in her arms; but deſpair followed ſwiftly, and ſeized her on a river's brink, which all at once interrupted her progreſs; it being hid from her ſight by trees and ſhrubs till ſhe ſtood on its bank, where treacherous memory now reminded her of this river, which flowed through immeaſurable wilds and emptied itſelf into the ſea many miles beyond the only bridge erected over it, which ſhe was to have paſſed had ſhe followed the guide's directions. Her dire regrets were interruped by the entreaties of Polly for drink. She looked around her, and found herſelf in a ſwampy kind of peninſula, formed by the river and ſea. The bank of the river was too ſteep for her to reach the water;

ſo placing the children under the ſhade of ſome young poplars, ſhe ſought about among the freſh-blowing watery weeds for ſome ſpring, or ſmall ſtanding pool. The ſcene was wonderfully rich and flouriſhing, though diverſified in ſome places by brown patches, where the ſun had dried the ſwamp up, and foreſts of tall flags yet ſtood their ground on the dry ſubſtance, with uncovered roots. Among them ſhe found what ſhe ſought; and, ſtooping where ſome willows dipped their leaves, leaned over to get the water, when a large black ſnake inrolled itſelf under her arm. She flew back to ſee if ſome monſter of the ſame kind had not got to the children; and joy pervaded her poor torn heart, when ſhe ſaw them ſitting ſafe under the trees, and the boy ſmiling at her return. She took them with her, and got drink at another place, but returned under the ſhade of the poplars to reſt and eat ſome bread, which

ſhe

ſhe yet had remaining in her work-bag; but they had not ſat long, and ſilence prevailed, before the ſnakes, with which the place abounded, hearing no longer the footing which had hitherto frightened them from her ſight, came creeping from their holes; horror dried up her tears, and ſnatching up the children, ſhe ſet out ſhe knew not whither; but heat and fatigue from the weight of the children again obliged her to ſeek the ſhade. She made choice of three oak trees, from whoſe roots ſhe cleared the briars, and made a bed of ruſhes and long graſs for little Polly, who became worſe and worſe; her mother, who could now attend to her words, found ſhe was light-headed; and, among her diſtracted cries for aſſiſtance, her father and mother were equally called upon to ſave her: but convulſions came on, which ſoon carried her off in agonies not greater than thoſe her mother was ſuffering, who loudly

accuſed herſelf as the cauſe, and called on Heaven to aſſiſt her, leſt the other little one ſhould ſhare the ſame fate.

" Yet, happy child!" cried ſhe, claſping her head in her ſtrained hand, " would " that your mother had died at the ſame " age!" Nearly exhauſted, ſhe leaned her aching head againſt the tree, at the foot of which lay the dead ſiſter and ſleeping brother, on their little ruſh beds. She had not dropt many tears over them ere ſhe ſuddenly heard the full tones of a French horn reſound through the ſolitary place; but ſeeing nothing, and being unable to call out, ſhe again reſigned her head to the ſame poſture; in which ſhe continued till ſpoke to by a gentleman on horſe-back, whoſe approach ſhe had not perceived, though he came up full gallop; ſo deeply was ſhe ſunk in grief. He appeared heated and impatient. Fanny implored his protection,

tection, and he promiſed aſſiſtance, but was out of ſight ere Fanny could take back her extended hand, which had endeavoured to ſtay him. She foreboded that he would not return, and, after waiting ſome hours, tied up one child in her apron, and, ſetting the other on her arm, again began her journey along the river ſide, to find the bridge, which ſhe knew muſt be many miles off, according to the windings of the river. She ſometimes ſtood contemplating on its brink:—It was too deep to paſs. She preſented her infant to Heaven for its protection.

A boatful of fiſhermen came ſwiftly down the current.—She ſtopped them, and they heard her caſe with pity, and offered to take her, if ſhe was not afraid to go twenty leagues out to ſea in ſo ſmall a boat, full of people. "I muſt not be afraid," ſaid Fanny; "but I have another child

" to trouble you with.—She died but to-
" day." The ſuperſtition of the men re-
jected the propoſal of receiving the dead
body with ſo much harſhneſs that the re-
duced mother put on ſmiles, and aſſumed
an engaging and ſubmiſſive tone to gain
her purpoſe, and, relying on their feelings,
aſked if it was poſſible for any of them
to leave the body of a loved infant un-
buried in the wilds, to be devoured by the
ravening beaſts? The fiſhermen poured
forth a volley of oaths, confirming their
firſt reſolution, and, daſhing their oars into
the water, again launched into the current.
She thought to call them back; but firſt
liſted the napkin from the child's face, and
looking at it, a promiſe broke from her
heart not to leave it. She waved her hand
to the departing crew, then looking round
the deſert ſcene, her eye reſted on the re-
maining child; the duty of ſaving that oc-
curred, and ſhe called to the men to return;

but

but an angle of the river, over-grown with flags, already hid them from her ſight, and her ſcreams to them to return were loſt in the noiſe of the oars and ruſhing courſe of the river.

More oppreſſed than ever, ſhe ſat down on the ground, and gave way to that fatigue of mind and body which ſhe had reſiſted ſo long. And here her throbbing heart applyed to parents for refuge,—to Vernon for compaſſion, as if they had really been within reach of the keen ſupplication.

Her next thoughts dwelt on the neceſſity of burying little Polly; but it was not eaſy to part in ſo ſolitary a ſituation, and reaſon was vanquiſhed in the conflict.

Towards evening, the heavy dews began to fall, and ſhe ſought ſhelter under a ſpreading, broad-leaved tree. As night

came on, ſhe was apprehenſive that her uſual fears in the dark would attend her, and that ſhe ſhould paſs the night in terrors inconceivable; but ſhe ſaw the laſt ſhade of the ſun, and the ſtars make their appearance, without the leaſt emotion. It was not quite dark at any time during the whole night; and, after a few hours, ſhe began to contemplate the ſcene around, to which the riſing moon awakened her:—it would require the powers of Miſery herſelf to properly paint this ſcene.—A range of black rugged mountains roſe beyond the ſwamp; the moon ſhone over them from the other ſide, which left that oppoſite to Fanny all dark, and, as ſhe imagined, teeming with monſters. To her left was an opening to the ſea, which appeared like a trembling ſheet of ſilver; to her right lay the wilds through which ſhe came, and in which were the inexplicable paths. At her back ran the fatal river, ſource of her

preſent

preſent misfortunes. Thus ſituated, ſhe kept conſtant watch around, that no beaſt of prey might approach unſeen, now and then caſting a look on, and ſtooping to take the hand of her little dead child, which was laid beſide her.

The diſtant daſhing of the ſea on the beach was all the noiſe that intruded on her during the firſt part of the night; but this was too calm a ſcene for the fated Fanny:—it was firſt invaded by the ſhrill howl of a diſtant wolf, which was anſwered by ſome much nearer. She hugged her little one ſtill cloſer to her, terrified leſt it ſhould awake, and by its cries attract thoſe ravenous animals. While liſtening to theſe nightly growlers, ſhe was alarmed with a ruſtling juſt behind her, and, looking round, ſhe beheld two balls of fire, alas! but too near her. Diſtracted with horror, ſhe jumped backwards, and the glaring

orbs approached her, which ſhe ſoon ſaw were the fiery eyes of a hungry wolf, on which the moon ſhone full and produced that appearance of the eyes. With her child in her arms, Fanny kept retreating backward, and, ſcreaming to the utmoſt of her power, in order to frighten the creature. But he advanced ſnarling and briſtling up all his angry frame, ready to take the laſt ſpring, to ſeize on his helpleſs prey.

Vernon was at camp, and in that moment drinking to the health of his new miſtreſs. Seven weeks after that night he returned home, to the port. His firſt viſit was that of ceremony to Miſs Clans; and immediately entertainments, viſiting, and parties of pleaſure were ſet on foot with ſuch unremitted ardour, that Vernon's remembrance of his cottage family (which he had forbade to recur to his mind) was not very

very obtruſive. Raillery too from his brother officers had ſo lowered them in his affections, ſo overpowered truth, that for a time he could not bear Fanny's name; thought himſelf diſgraced by her, and a dupe, as his uncle Herod ſtill aſſured him.

He had never heard of her ſince the time of her falſe marriage was broke to her, as he was ſuddenly ordered away with ſome troops; and his uncle John's letter, which gave an account of her reception of the news, had been unfortunately diſpatched after another officer of the name of Vernon; but at length a careful ſoldier brought it right. Vernon was in extreme hurry, but he read it with ſome degree of compunction, yet continued to dreſs himſelf for the ball, which was given in honour of the approaching nuptials. He went to it, elated with hope of the pleaſure it would afford; but, the momentary elevation paſt,

there was nothing ſufficient to keep Fanny from ſucceeding to entire poſſeſſion of his mind. The letter ran in his head, and he quitted the aſſembly room, and returned to his lodgings to reperuſe it. At his lodgings he regretted the thouſand pleaſures he had left, and returned to the aſſembly, where he again experienced that apathy to them, which at his lodgings he could not conceive.—He returned home once more, and ſeeking in an old baggage trunk for Fanny's picture, remained fixed by it,—While a gloomy ſhade overſpread the remembrance of the ball, and a darker ſtill the tranſactions of the morning, which were marriage articles. Fanny's face remained fair and radiant in his hand, and he here exclaimed, "Dear, good, lovely Fanny, why have I "not heard from you? why is accurſed "worldly luxury in ſuch eſtimation that I "muſt deſert you for it? but to-morrow "will I ſee you, come of it what may."

As

As he drew near the houſe, he experienced that ſenſation which ever attends a return home; and as he never had been received but with tears of joy by Fanny, he had no conception of any other than a warm reception, a few tears, and then a perfect reconciliation. "I acknowledge," ſaid he, as he drew near to the gate, looking fondly at the houſe, "that I never yet "found a fault in her." But what forebodings ſtruck him, when, inſtead of her welcome countenance, he ſaw the whole houſe a blank, ſhut up, and the weeds again grown high before the door: he ſhook the gate, but it would not open. He then had recourſe to the ſtaring neighbours, who directed him to the old woman who had the key.

She could give no farther account than that Madam came to her hut one day, looking piteouſly, with her two children, and

and gave in the key, ſaying, if ever Mr. Vernon came to enquire after her, they were to tell him, there was a letter for him on her dreſſing table. "She ſaid," added the old woman, "that ſhe was going to "her own country; but the folks think "ſhe is loſt in the wilds: for the guide "left her. She looked piteouſly indeed, "Sir: and no body can tell what is become "of her or the babes." Vernon ſnatched the keys from her, and haſtily rattled open the doors. No one was by to obſerve or interrupt the grief that ſeized his repentant heart on entering his empty dark abode, lately containing every one that was particularly dear to him, but he knew not how dear till now that he ſought for them in vain. Fanny's clothes, folded on a table in the hall were the firſt things that ſtruck Vernon's ſight, on his entrance, and appeared as the ſignifiers of her death. Aggravating the loſs of the now moſt truly

beloved

beloved Fanny, with trembling hands he opened the parlour window. The chair in which ſhe uſed to ſit, with the work-baſket yet on the table by it, had near ten minutes of his deep attention. He turned from the ſight, and ſearched above ſtairs for the letter, which, by the light that ſhone through the creeks of the window-ſhutters, he ſaw lying, as promiſed, on the dreſſing table, and, by one of the moſt accomodating of theſe, read it.

" At length puniſhment hath overtaken
" the undutiful child; and vain is the be-
" lief of any who hope to eſcape it;—but
" may their lots be leſs miſerable than
" mine: more ſo it cannot be.——Are we
" really parted?—You took no leave of
" me; but farewel to you, James. I am
" going to England. Never more ſhall
" we meet; at leaſt I hope ſo:—it is my
" duty,

" duty, and I will not be ſlack in that for
" the future, be it as painful as it will.

" I have left in the drawer of the deſk
" an account of what trifling debts you
" owe in this place, and an account of
" the ſum you left me, as far as I ſpent;
" the remainder I am obliged to make uſe
" of to tranſport me and my little ones to
" England, and to maintain us at firſt, as I
" cannot immediately expect to meet with
" work, and home, you know, I have none
" to go to, having forfeited that, and un-
" happily lived to bid farewell to the very
" perſon that led me from that home: yet
" I forgive you, and, oh! how earneſtly
" I pray that Heaven may forgive you too
" for imbittering all the future days of one
" of its ſervants! for never, never ſhall I
" ceaſe to regret you. You know not how
" forlorn I go to England:—unuſed to
" buſtle in the world, and miſſing you,

" my

" my heart and ſoul are dead within me:
" yet, with honeſty in our train, will little
" George, and I, and Polly, try our for-
" tunes.—Work or ſtarve I know it muſt
" be, if we weather it to England.—
" Though I have not ſo much ſpirit and
" ſtrength as your ſiſter you have ſo often
" told me of, I intend to work hard and
" exert myſelf to my utmoſt and laſt breath,
" to maintain the children. If I can but
" get work, I care not what it is, whither
" field or houſhold; and, I promiſe you,
" they ſhall fare well, if my hands are not
" laid early uſeleſs in the grave. And,
" when you, my James, come over, years
" hence, with your rich bride, and in all
" your proſperity; if in the ſtreets of
" London you chance to hear ſome me-
" lancholy winter-night's cry, that ſhould
" ſtrike your ear, as like mine or your
" miſerable fatherleſs children's voice, ſend
" the poor wretches out a ſhilling for our

" loſt

" loſt ſakes.—It is all the tribute I claim
" to my memory.

" But think not that poverty is my woe;
" for, while I have you to regret, I ſhall
" as willingly be poor as rich. Adieu,
" gay Southampton officer. When this
" reaches you, I ſhall be ſailing back a
" penitent to England, without one poor
" hope for myſelf, but many anxious ones
" for my children: ſuch is the lot of wo-
" man! Pity her, Vernon. If you can-
" not, welcome, to a wretch without one
" friend, ſtormy voyage, rough treatment,
" ſickneſs, ſcreaming children, remorſe,
" and poverty. When I lift my foot, for
" the laſt time, from the American ſhore,
" think of the rend I ſhall ſuffer when I
" repeat what I now muſt ſay, Adieu to
" Happineſs and Vernon.

" FRANCES."

Vernon's

Vernon's hand ſmote not his breaſt, but his heart did; and, ſtamping, he fearfully wiſhed he had been juſt.

He returned home, after two days ſpent alone in the houſe. Remorſe purſued him; but he carefully concealed it from his bantering brerheren, who had hitherto rallied him out of his proper ſenſes. Without conſulting Herod, he wrote to Miſs Clans and her father, that it was no longer in his power to fulfil his engagements; but never could be induced to ſay farther on the ſubject; and his concern was evidently ſo great when it was endeavoured at, that the officers dared no more venture at raillery.—He ſent to all the near ports, where Fanny might have taken her paſſage for England; but, gaining no tidings of her, could only wiſh the beſt, and began to conſole himſelf with the bottle and his companions, though the thorn in his ſide would prick ſometimes

times; but it was ſoon lulled to a dull pain, which he conſtantly bore about with him, while his deceived comrades congratulated themſelves on the reſtoration of their fine, gay, thoughtleſs, young fellow, attributing ſome tranſient looks of ſorrow to the recent loſs of his beloved uncle John, who fell in the action of ———, a few months before.

At a meſs of officers, where ſome country gentlemen were invited to ſupper, and Vernon was particularly gay, they were ſhewing ſome ladies' pictures, among which Vernon produced one of Fanny, the intereſting one which had occaſioned his laſt viſit to Farly.

When one of the ſtrangers, from whoſe hand the picture fell, was ſeen ſuddenly pale, diſordered, and making towards the door. The circumſtance looking ſuſpici-

ous.

ous, he was gently detained and aſked if it was the ſight of that picture which affected him ſo much? He returned no anſwer; but, endeavouring to get from them, found he had no ſtrength, and ſunk into a chair, muttering to himſelf, that now the time was come, being much preſſed to declare the cauſe of his preſent trouble, he ſeemed to recollect himſelf, and declared that he never had been guilty of murder. They preſented the picture to him again, on which he groaned out, "Oh, it is the "very face that leant againſt the tree, and "was the moſt ſtriking ſight of human "miſery under heaven which I ever "ſaw." They aſked him, if he knew the lady? He ſaid no, but that he had ſeen her in the woods, and ſuppoſed that her remains might be found there now.

Upon hearing this, which was looked upon as the involuntary confeſſion of a murderer,

murderer overwhelmed with agony and remorſe, ſome gentlemen were preparing to have him ſecured, which he perceived, and with the cold ſweat ſettled on his face, and wearied accent, told them, he believed he could go through the account, which he now ſaw it neceſſary to give them, and aſking for drink to ſupport his ſpirits, addreſſed himſelf to his two aſtoniſhed friends, who had introduced him to the meſs, and began thus:

"You and my family will now no "longer be at a loſs to account for the "ſtrange alterations you have lately com-"plained of in me.——My parents, my "fortune, my home give me no pleaſure; "and hunting, which was the ſoul of my "life, I can no longer practiſe.—My food "diſguſts me, and I am waſted to the "ſkeleton you ſee.

"Hunting

" Hunting one day, (the laſt of my
" peace) in a large company, about twenty
" miles from home, in a part of the foreſt
" where the wild beaſts were the moſt nu-
" merous, I ſaw ſomething at a diſtance
" of a bright blue :—the colour appeared
" ſtrange there; and, bending my courſe
" that way, ſaw it was the dreſs of a lady,
" who was leaning her head againſt a tree,
" at the foot of which were two children.
" When I ſtopped, ſhe looked up; her
" face was fair, like that picture, and I
" knew her again from having ſeen her the
" day before, ſleeping on ſome flags in the
" hovel in the foreſt. She implored my
" protection, telling me, ſhe was loſt, and
" unable any longer to ſupport her chil-
" dren; that ſhe had wandered many
" miles out of her way, and many again
" to find it; but, it being all in vain, ſhe
" had, juſt before I came, reſigned herſelf
" for death in that place. A lovelier, or

" more moving object never was beheld.
" I liſtened to her with compaſſion; but,
" like the baſtard of humanity, at the
" ſame time I liſtened to the cry of the
" hunters, who, I heard, had very fine
" ſport; and, being impatient to join
" them, told her haſtily, that I would
" ſend ſome help, and, urged on by my
" inordinate love of the chaſe, left her
" on her knees ſupplicating my return,
" while I ſwiftly followed my companions;
" among whom I arrived, warm with ex-
" erciſe, and elated with the fine career
" and glorious leaps my horſe had taken,
" which I related to them; and they,
" with equal warmth, engaged me with
" their accounts, which were given with
" ſuch bewildering infatuation and noiſy
" oaths as baffled all attention to the re-
" membrance of my unfortunate petitioner
" for ſome time, and, freſh game being
" ſprung, I made to diſplay the powers

" of my darling horſe, purſued on with
" the reſt, and we were many miles from
" the lady, before I thought ſeriouſly of
" her caſe; nor could I then find in my
" heart to ſtop in the midſt of my courſe,
" to return to her, or mention it to my
" companions, who, I knew, being go-
" verned by the ſpirit of bravado, would
" laugh me to ſcorn for the milk-ſop er-
" rand, if, by ſending back any of the
" ſervants, their ſport was impeded at ſo
" intereſting a time, and, in ſome degree,
" adopting their ſentiments, I repulſed
" every effort of my heart in her favour,
" determining, after the hunt was finiſhed,
" to go myſelf, or ſend. Reproaches thus
" falſely quieted, I heartily purſued the
" courſe; which finiſhed, we adjourned
" to a cottage for refreſhment, and my
" great deſire to get to drinking, and again
" hear and relate the exploits of the chaſe,
" inclined me to think it would be better

" to poſtpone ſending to the lady till after
" dinner, when the men and horſes would
" be reſted.

" But, after dinner, liquor had animated
" our ſpirits above the pitch of converſa-
" tion; and diſputes aroſe to quarrels,
" which, towards morning, ended in a
" general battle, where more fell van-
" quiſhed by ſleep than by blows. The
" firſt object of my waking thoughts was
" the fair woman in the woods, and I went
" forth with a deſign to perſuade the party
" to hunt that way. But the plan of ope-
" rations for the day had already been ſet-
" tled without me, as they could not find
" out what corner of the houſe I had ſlept
" in. As the intended route was towards
" my home, I thought it would be a breach
" of hoſpitality not to attend them there;
" that it was a great ſacrifice for me to leave
" my companions and all ſport, to return

" eighteen or twenty miles, to find out a
" perſon that moſt probably ſomebody elſe
" had already met with and guided out of
" the woods. Then I thought of ſend-
" ing ſome ruſtic from the houſe, but I
" could not direct them, as it was all a
" ſolitary wild, without any diſtinguiſh-
" ing marks, and little known. Every
" project I could form was exceptionable,
" and reaſonably ſo, except the one of
" going myſelf, which I could not conſent
" to, though my conſcience urged it
" much. And yet I was not determined
" till all was ready to depart, and they
" called on me to make haſte. I mounted,
" at firſt irreſolute, whether to follow
" them, or turn ſilent back to the poor
" lady's aſſiſtance; but, being unprac-
" tiſed in reſiſting temptations, and the
" hurry and confuſion facilitating my
" eſcape from myſelf, I ſet out with my
" friends, and, reaching home, fell into

" the uſual drunken exceſſes and riot of
" hunters for that day, during which, I
" am told, I often mentioned the lady; but
" the ſtory was unheeded, they thinking
" it had happened ſome years paſt, or that
" it was a fiction.

" But conſcience," continued the hunter, " which could effect ſo little with my
" companions, reminded me, when ſleeping, of the ſad affair I had on my hands.
" —The lady was for ever before me, upon
" her knees; or I ſeeking her in the
" woods. At length I was awakened by
" the cries of the children; who, I thought,
" had loſt her, and I ſaw ſearching in the
" brambles for her. I aroſe that inſtant,
" and ſet out; but, before I reached the
" three trees where I left them, I ſaw (oh,
" that myſelf had been the horrid object!)
" a human ſkull and other bones ſcattered
" about. I returned home, and have been

" the

" the wretch you have ſeen me ever ſince,
" for peace and tranquillity, which were
" formerly my conſtant companions, have
" for ever deſerted me."

The hunter ceaſed; the tremor of miſery was upon all his hearers, and for ſome minutes no words ſucceeded his; but in ſilence he remained the fixed object of their dimmed ſight, while the conſumed and unſnuffed candles left them in a horrible light, which but ſhewed the dark colour the ſtory had ſettled on every countenance, and when a movement took place, it was that of general conſternation. Each of the military looking with diſmay on his neighbour as on a fiend; for, conſcious, and ſick at heart, they recollected the part " they had taken againſt the unfortunate lady, in perſuading Vernon to deſert her.

The ſelf-condemning hunter, in the midſt of them, looking like Satan, abaſhed, with his eyelids weighed down by guilt, little ſuſpected how much the others participated in it.

It was indeed like an infernal abode, with a poor wretch, juſt admitted into it, wailing and gnaſhing his teeth, for ſuch was the ſituation of Vernon from the time the bones were mentioned.

Hamilton, being the only one in company whoſe conſcience left him free to act with fortitude and prudence, broke up the party, firſt engaging the hunter and his two friends to return the next morning and conduct them to the ſad place.

They travelled the two following days with all the melancholy ceremony conſiſtent with the ſentiments they entertained of each

each other; and, arriving within ſight of the three trees, which the hunter pointed out to them, and againſt which Fanny had leaned, the firſt thing that ſtruck Vernon's ſight was a pink work-bag, empty, and blown on a buſh, and, ſome way farther, a child's ſtraw bonnet; but the bones were removed from whence the hunter had ſeen them; yet they were not to depart without proof, one of the dogs bringing a little hand and laying it at Vernon's feet. Fainting for ſome time relieved him from the ſight of day, and the remembrance of his paſt conduct. On his recovery he intreated they would return and leave him to himſelf; that he would only ſpend ſome days there, and return to them again: but Hamilton's care conducted him home. Some of the other officers ſought for the remains of Fanny, in order to bury them, and make that ſmall reparation for the advice they had given againſt her. But the ſearch was

in vain; for the wolf who had approached ſo near to devour Fanny, was obſtructed in his way by the dead child (from which ſhe had retreated ſome paces) and, ſeizing it by the throat, tore it with all the fierceneſs incident to his nature, and made off with it into the woods, leaving Fanny to deplore afreſh the loſs of little Polly, and ſpend the reſt of the night in terrors paſt deſcription.

But her hour was not yet come, and ſhe again beheld the morning ſun, which chaſed away the wild beaſts, and revived her hopes of finding the bridge. As the dawn appeared, her fears became leſs, and ſleep would have reduced her, had not her reſiſtance been great. Early ſhe purſued her courſe, keeping as near the river as trees and buſhes would permit, till it was loſt to her view in a thick grove of high cypreſs trees, which ſhe was afraid to enter,

leſt

leſt it might be the reſort of wild beaſts; but the fear of miſſing the bridge prevailed; and, making her way through thorns which ſeemed to barricade the entrance of the grove, ſhe followed the river to the darkeſt part before ſhe looked back, and then, through the long avenue, beheld the light and ſky at a great diſtance. There was now neither underwood nor graſs beneath theſe baleful trees, which excluded every ray of ſun from the damp earth, and ſpread a grateful black veil over the creeping vermin that lived on its vapour. A toad or eft was diſturbed at every ſtep. Here the ſtream ran deep and ſluggiſh; the earth boggy, and, as ſhe advanced further, threatened to ſwallow her up every moment: but caution guiding her ſteps, ſhe eſcaped the vermin, and avoided the ſucking ſwamps, till the ſhade began to draw towards a concluſion. A few herbs grew, and the light juſt appeared. Fanny joyed

the proſpect of being nearly extricated, preſſed haſtily forward through the habitation of two old adders, whoſe territories had never yet been invaded with impunity, as appeared by ſeveral brute ſkeletons which lay ſcattered about the place. She did not perceive the ſcaly circlings of one of them till her foot was on its head; but ſhe, inſenſible of that, lifted it to ſhake the adder off; when it raiſed its bruiſed head to her ancle, and feebly infuſed its dying venom. She ſhook it off; but ſo great was her terror that ſhe remained inconſcious of its bite, till the poiſon circulated in every vein, and uncommon anguiſh announced its fatal cauſe. As ſhe felt it increaſe upon her, ſhe wrapt the child up, ready alſo for death; but laid it far from her, leſt in her convulſive agonies ſhe might kill it herſelf; and, ſtanding at a diſtance, looked up, and prayed for it. But the Heaven which ſhe invoked, was hid from her

her ſight by the black canopy the trees had ſpread. She then looked a long farewel to her child, till ſickneſs grew upon her, and, loſing ſight of it, ſhe fell writhing to the ground, where a heavy ſleep and dead numbneſs overpowered her.

Night drawing on, the evening breezes ruſhed through the grove, and in the freſh waftage of the wind a wandering ſpirit was flitting by, in ſearch, through the univerſe, for a loſt, beloved object. The lonely figure on the earth ſtopped its courſe, and raiſed that pity which words cannot expreſs. The ſpotleſs ſoul hovered over the hidden face of Fanny with friendly wiſhes; when the wind, as if to oblige its ſoft inhabitant, blew from her face the weeds and graſs which in agonies ſhe had preſſed over it; and the late freed ſoul, whoſe body was not yet mouldered in the tomb, knew Fanny for her daughter. She ſettled with a kind

influence on her heart, and with ſweet dreams chaſed away the horrible images of her mind, which were writhing ſerpents, and an aſſemblage of every fear ſhe had ſuffered in the ſhades; being ſometimes in the miſery of imagining ſhe was going deep down in the bog, already covered with creeping vermin.

To calm this diſordered mind, the powerful dear figure of her mother appeared to her, in her uſual dreſs and benign countenance, with extended arms to receive her forgiven child, as ſhe gently called her; and when ſhe perceived that the dreaming Fanny ſprang as into her arms, ſhe involved every ſenſe in that ſoft balmy calm which reſtored her troubled imagination to ſleep, inſtead of the poiſoned lethargy. And this ſhe enjoyed till the ſun roſe next morning, and, darting his firſt beams in at the eaſt end of the grove, ſhone among the trunks

trunks of thoſe trees whoſe tops he could not penetrate when above them.

Fanny awoke as from the dead.—For ſome time ſhe could recollect nothing but her mother, and the long-paſt ſcenes in which ſhe uſed to ſee her. She looked about for the well-known traces of home, and beheld the wild ſcene on which ſhe had cloſed her eyes the night before. The wraping of the child lay at ſome diſtance, and Fanny, doubting if it yet contained her little mortal, with great difficulty dragged her ſwelled ancle on to it. It was faſt aſleep, and comfort and hope wrought her to a ſmile, while ſhe looked on its ſerene countenance. She durſt not kiſs it; but, in the grateful joy of her heart for its ſafety, added to the ſoothing remembrance of her mother's figure and forgiveneſs in her dream, ſhe fell on her knees, and returned moſt hearty thanks to Heaven,

for

for permitting her ſo happy a ſtate of mind as ſhe at that minute enjoyed.

She knew not that the good genius was reſtored to her; but her fortitude and virtuous patience under misfortunes had at length counteracted the evil genius.—But it was not till that painful moment, when Fanny, ſinking herſelf down, prayed for the child, that ſhe was finally conquered: —then pitying Heaven gave back the good genius, who had ſo long waited for this moment, and now embraced Fanny, as ſhe had foretold, in miſery; but gave that harmony to her breaſt, which ſhe ſo well deſerved to know; and, ſummoning the departed ſpirit of her mother to her aid, rendered Fanny unrepining in ſo dire a ſituation; for ſhe was yet in pain and very weak, wiſhing much that the child could walk, as her trembling and ſwelled arms could ſcarce ſupport it: but ſhe was anxious

to

to get on her journey, fearing the worſt effects of the poiſon might not yet be over, and that, dying in the woods, ſhe ſhould leave the helpleſs child to the jaws of their wild inhabitants.

Onward ſhe went then, ſetting forward her right foot, dragging after it the wounded one, on which ſhe reſted in a very painful, tottering ſtate till ſhe again ſet forward the right.—But her innocent mind was fully employed on her mother, and tuned to love and ſoftneſs; the faint ſtate too of her health rendered her more reſigned, more yielding to that ſoft ſway by which the attendant ſpirit influenced her to turn to the right paths: for, having reached the eaſt end of the grove, ſeveral ſhallow ſtreams broke from the river, ſome of which would have miſled her, had ſhe not croſſed them and followed the main ſtream. She knew

not

not why, but found that it was dear to her ſo to do.

Fanny then entered a ſweet flowery wood, that left a broad margin for her to purſue her way by the river, which again ran deep, and the wild poplars, bending over her, dipped their trembling leaves. She bruſhed by a profuſion of berries; but food was not welcome to her appalled appetite, and ungrateful to her ſight, till that ſame ſoft influence guided her ſteps to ſome flouriſhing plants, on which her eyes were fixed long before ſhe reached them. She recollected that they were like an herb ſhe had ſeen in Wales, called adder's tongue, and that they were ſaid to be ſalutary in her caſe. She applied them, and received immediate eaſe. Then lying down for an hour's repoſe, awoke ſo refreſhed from it, that ſhe was convinced of the efficacy of the herbs. Her appetite returned, and, with

with the child, ſhe feaſted on the fruits that ſurrounded them.

But the bank on the ſide of the river ſoon became much higher; and, riſing gradually for near two miles, ſhe found herſelf on the height of a ſteep cliff, riſing perpendicular from the bed of the river. She approached no more its brink; but ſaw through ſeveral breaks of trees, with which it was nearly covered the country on the other ſide the river.—It was a flat marſhy land, watered by a very large river, on the banks of which Fanny knew ſtood the town ſhe was going to, and which ſhe was in high hopes of ſoon ſeeing from the ſummit of the cliff.

But, though the good genius ruled in Fanny's mind, the evil one ſtill wrought the accidents of her life, the deſertion of family and parents not being yet ſufficiently

expiated

expiated to exempt her from the machinations of the evil genius, who hoped, by aggravating misfortunes, again to tempt Fanny into rebellion.

Night and a thick fog coming on, she feared to lose the direction of the river, near which she was equally afraid of going, lest the underwood on the brink of the cliff might deceive her, and, with the child, should fall to its bottom. She then sought for some hollow tree, in which to await the approaching night; for the day birds had ceased to sing, and a dead silence reigned as usual about an hour before the nightly noises of the forest began.

An old bear and her whelps were already walked forth, when Fanny entered their den, wet with the fog. She congratulated herself on the shelter it afforded; nor could all the presages of her good genius remove her

her from it. It was ſituated under a bank of higher ground, from which the interwoven roots of trees ſhot out far, and, being combined with earth, bid defiance to weather. Here ſhe took up her abode for the night; and ſitting down, leaning over the infant in her lap, this lonely, loſt, benighted traveller watched and wept till dawn, when the howlings of the woods ceaſed, and the exhauſted mother fell aſleep. Then the loved ſpirit of her mother appeared radiant as the riſing orb, but in the attitude of departure, ſaying, "Soon ſhall "we meet again; nor then, like thy Ver- "non, will I deſert thee; nor muſt he "then ſhare with me your affection: for, "with the pure ſentiments of your diſem- "bodied ſoul, you will look back on him "with horror, and on yourſelf with re- "proach, for having ſo loved one whom "you will ſee among his companions like "the ſtricken deer, conſcience-ſmit, and

"ever

" ever miſerable, when not intoxicated:
" for his ſoul originally was pure as thy
" own.—But, being debaſed to their level,
" which he cannot enjoy, is already in tor-
" ments, too ſad a prelude to ſtill greater;
" for he is condemned."—" Oh, no!"
cried Fanny, ſtarting in her ſleep, " mercy
" will pardon him; and hereafter he may
" haunt thoſe deſerts and lonely ſhores
" with you and I." The ſhade ſpread apart her hands, drooped her head in ſorrow, and, vaniſhing, uttered the ſad monoſyllable " No."

Pangs of the keeneſt grief for the fate of Vernon, awoke Fanny; and, with the tears ſtreaming down her face, ſhe ſprung on her knees to pray for him. But, ere the prayer was pronounced, her eyes ſought in vain for the child. She looked inſtantly round,—in her own arms,—at her feet; but there was no child. She called

called it by its name, and her cries pierced the air, while ſhe beat her head againſt the trunks of the trees. She ran frantic up the cliffs, calling on the wild beaſts to reſtore her child. Then flung herſelf as from the cliff, though ſhe was not near its brink. She ſought alſo to hide her face among the briars—Then aroſe all torn: nor ſtopped her eager pace till ſhe had gained the ſummit of the cliff; when ruſhing from among the trees, (which ceaſed to grow towards the top) the promiſed land lay all before her; the bridge, the town, the large river beyond; all, all, as deſcribed to her, lay in view. It recalled her ſenſes.—She ſtood ſtill; beheld ſteadfaſtly and long the much-wiſhed-for town, and the tall ſhips riding in its harbour, which were to have conveyed her and her children to England. She looked back to the woods for them.—Then at the town again, which brought Vernon's idea to her heart; for it was there

the

they landed firſt together. What recollections alternately rent and ſoftened her boſom! How deeply ſad was her ſoul!

"Oh, Providence!" ſhe cried, "why, "why was I thus deſtined?" She had already thought to deſtroy herſelf, and her agitations became more ſhocking as her murmurings increaſed; for the airy guardian, the cheerer of her mind, was miſſed, obliged to fly the reproacher of Heaven. She was already gone, and Fanny left to ſorrow's worſt work on the mind, deſpair. Yet ſhe wiſhed to dray, and, endeavouring to recall her ſcattered powers, ſunk on her knees; but her troubles bowed her lower, and ſhe lay extended on the earth. She heard not; ſhe ſaw not, the gathering rock birds, which were ſkimming over her head, and circling round her, having left the ſea from knowledge of an approaching ſtorm; and black as Fanny's deſpair were the gathering

thering clouds around her. The low-ſituated inhabitants left their labour, and, retiring under ſhelter of the long workſhops by the river ſide, waited, as they oft were wont, to ſee the tempeſt vent itſelf on the mountain's top.

The loud near thunder had arouſed poor Fanny. It became very dark; but through the black ſcene, amid the lightning's bright inceſſant flaſhes, was ſeen a poor diſtracted human figure paſſing and repaſſing on the mountain, in every attitude of diſtreſs and frenzy. Sometimes with arms extended; then on her knees; and again with claſped hands invoking her deſtiny. No ſooner was it known on the mart than every eye was attentive; every glaſs out to view the dreadful ſtrife, till the ſtorm pouring thicker around her, ſhe became ſcarce diſcernible, but at intervals, and then only to thoſe who had the beſt glaſſes.

" Now

" Now," cried an old ſailor, " ſhe is ſit-
" ting quite ſtill on the very brink of the
" cliff, looking down to its bottom :—but
" now ſhe has turned her face, and is look-
" ing full at the cloud from whence the
" ſtorm proceeds :—the lightning flaſhes
" in her face, but ſhe moves not." The whirlwind increaſed and a heavy ſhower entirely hid her from their ſight: when it abated again, they had a glimpſe of her. —It was the laſt ; ſhe was tumbling, daſhing down the craggy ſide of the cliff. Nought but troubled ſleep ſealed the eyes of thoſe that night who had ſeen young Fanny's end ; for ſcarce yet was ſhe of age. Early next morning the recent ſcene drew forth to the foot of the mountain a ſoldier's little girl, whoſe compaſſionate heart was the more engaged, as, from the account, ſhe had figured to herſelf the diſtreſſed object as a child of her own ſize. She was, at the age of eleven years, nurſe to one about

as many months old; and, being ſuffered to ſtray about all day idly with it, now took her way to the cliffs, in ſearch of the unfortunate creature, little dreaming it was her mother's benefactreſs, and the perſon ſhe was taught to pray for every night. As ſhe approached, a groan drew her attention. She ſaw a woman lying on the ground, and, fearing to go near, called to her; but receiving no anſwer, went up, and ſtood looking over her, till the yet beautiful face of Fanny awakened her remembrance; but ſhe ſaw no ſigns of life, till the infant in her arms, making a childiſh noiſe peculiar to themſelves, diſturbed the parting ſoul of Fanny. She opened her eyelids; her eyes were for ever fixed; but ſhe ſaw the child. A faint convulſive effort was made to move.—Every limb refuſed; but her lips expreſſed a ſmile.—Her eyelids dropt, and her ſoul fled.

The girl made haſte back with the account, and led her father to the place.—He once was ſon to the affluent, but neglected when love brought him to the cottage, and misfortunes to a diſcharged ſoldier, when Fanny placed him, with the mite ſhe had to ſpare, as drawing-maſter at the port. He now found his patroneſs on the graſs, ſtill and cold.

His wife came next, to weep, and, in pain and truth of heart, pour over the beloved, woe-urging countenance of Fanny a funeral oration, dictated by gratitude, rendered ſolemn by ſorrow, and endearing by love. She covered her with willow boughs, watched by her all day, and, in the evening, the whole family returned to bury her, with rural rites, at the foot of the mountain. But when ſhe was laid in her hard-reached, peaceful manſion, ſweetly decked with flowers, and the retiring rays

of

of the ſun ſtill radiant on her face, the ſoldier's heart failed him at the laſt ceremony of the earth, which was for ever to exclude the highly-honoured face,—he trembled, and, while the mother had turned from the ſight, the children withheld his hand, ſaying, "There muſt be more flowers; no-"thing but flowers on the hands and "face:" and, while they ſought about for them, Lodamar took his pencil from his pocket and ſketched the ſcene, till the laſt beams of the ſun withdrew from the grove. Then was Fanny's cold ſcene cloſed, willows bound tight over the turf, and the ſorrowful family returned home.

But every Sunday they viſited the place; and not long after found the willows ſprouting out, which, in time, became ever-weeping mourners drooping round her grave.

Lodamar often came by night to ſee that her remains were undiſturbed; and, by contemplating near them, thought to detatch himſelf from the world, the rigours of which lay painful on his injured mind. He was deſirous of deſpiſing thoſe vanities he ſighed after as due to his birth, and by Fanny's grove he found the taſk eaſy.—There he could hear the diſtant din of the port, when the viſiting coaches began to roll to each enemy's door, and pitied the vain life. But, on his return, no ſooner did he enter the gates than he wiſhed for ſome luxury, and regretted his forfeited birth-right. But he knew his medicine; and returned, as night came on, to the ſalutary ſolitary, ſcene, ſometimes penſively ſoothed by tracing the melancholy ſimilarity of their ſituations; for he, as late the poor interred, had a family in England to pour forth his regrets for. But never could he ſend his ſoul ſo entirely among them; never

never ſo diſtinctly trace his twenty years of ſorrow back to his days of happineſs, as from Fanny's grave.

In his laſt viſit the ſcene was unuſually ſolemn; ſo deep his contemplations, and ſo ſtrong the preſages of his approaching diſſolution, that turning to the rock on which he leaned, he bequeathed Fanny's memory to a more laſting guardian, and, by the bright light of the moon, carved her epitaph on it.

Forty feet from this ſtony baſe,
Towards the river, where the rich herbs grow,
May the ſtranger ſee a ſingle grave,
Untimely reach'd from yonder pond'rous height,
By beauty, youth, and innocence;
Beſide that ſmall rais'd flowery ſpot,
The ſoul of Fanny Vernon fled:
'Twas there her true heart broke:—
'Tis there her body's laid.

Peep not from the upper brink,
Ye mercileſs wolves, with dire intent
On Fanny's grave! Let your frightful howls
Be echo'd far away; nor interrupt
The nightly murmur of the river paſſing by;
While the ſoothed ſhade ſolitary reigns,
And the lonely willows on her grave,
Silent, bend to the ſlow-paſſing gale.

Some years after Lodamar's death, when the war with America ceaſed, and Fanny's grave was nearly overgrown, the re-embarkation of Vernon's regiment happened at the port where firſt they landed. They entered the town with the uſual military pomp. Vernon could not but recollect Fanny, and her memory was ſolemnized with her favourite march.

Many enquiries were made at Vernon's lodgings after her, by families ſhe had viſited there. But his ſervant was careful not to let his maſter know of them, as he had,

had, at unguarded times, heard him break out into ſuch teſtimonies and admiration of her worth as left no doubt but he would be much moved at the affecting tidings of her friends' remembrance.

"Which way ſhall we walk?" ſaid Vernon, as he leaned over the bridge with the other officers. "It ſeems moſt inviting," ſaid young Hamilton, "along the rocks; "for there are ſhady caverns." They purſued that courſe, ſometimes climbing the rocks, gathering the dwarf ſtones, and ſearching for the rock birds' eggs; and thought to return at the angle of the cliff. But then a new ſcene opened, and the willows were in view. Hamilton found them attractive, and, leaving the river, croſſed into the midſt of the curve it formed, and reached the mute mourners of Fanny's ſilent home. The others followed, careleſs, and plucking to pieces their gathered

flowers as they walked. They ſtood round the grave, contemplating the beauty of the willows, and lifting their drooping branches, which reſted on the ſmall raiſed ſpot.

" Weeping willows, from a recollec-
" tion, always make me melancholy," ſaid Vernon, " and I think this looks like a " grave." It was then obvious to them all; and the heat of the ſun was leſs powerful while they ſtood over it, than the chill which it gave. Vernon threw down on it the remainder of his flowers, and turning ſilently towards the port, was followed by the reſt, alternately gay, ſorrowful, and romantic; but often at a ſtand looking back at the willows.

The firſt fair wind, Vernon and his diviſion ſailed for England. Hamilton was ſome weeks later; and often rambled to the rocks; and, when the ſun was exceſ-

five,

ſive, reſted under the willows, where he read or wrote as Fancy prompted, on his old ſchool-fellow's ſiſter's grave. At length he found the inſcription on the rock, and the tears of ſorrow were never more plenteouſly ſhed.

As ſoon as Hamilton arrived in England and joined Vernon, he watched an opportunity to relate to him the cataſtrophe of Fanny; but he was already plunged deep in the uniting currents of gaming, libertiniſm, and drinking, which bore him from her idea, which nevertheleſs preſented itſelf, pale on the ſhore, every time an interval permitted him to look back on his paſt life. It was in one of thoſe moments when Vernon (who was a fine figure, and his vitiated life not yet apparent in his face) drew the attention of the company at Lord M****'s; where he was leaning againſt a window which looked into the gardens

and

and park, on which his eyes were conſtantly bent; and ſo very ſad his countenance, that his kind entertainer wiſhed to awaken him from ſome diſtreſſing ſcene:— "Are not the gardens well laid out?" ſaid his Lordſhip, as he approached him; "but the wilderneſs is ſorry work." Ah!" ſaid Vernon, ſtarting, "I was indeed ſor-"rowful in the wilderneſs, ſeeking the re-"mains of my wife. But what are you "talking of? what have I done? what "have I ſaid? that you ſhould know what "I was thinking of." Hamilton drew him from the aſtoniſhed circle, under pretence of ſhewing him the gardens; and, in the moſt retired part, diſcloſed to him the reaſon why the willows in America over the grave he knew not had made him ſo ſad. Vernon liſtened in profound ſilence to the recital of Fanny's death and interment; and only waving his hand to Hamilton, abruptly returned to the houſe, where

where he ſhone forth in the brilliancy of wit, high ſpirits, and enjoyment.

But the hour of departure arrived, and Vernon's ſolitary lodging received him:—his ſervant was abſent:—he had no light; and ſat down to await his return: when the remembrance of Fanny, no longer to be reſiſted by his nearly exhauſted ſpirits, recurred powerfully on his mind.—Fanny and her wrongs hovered in every dark part of the room.

The liquor he had drank failed of its uſual operation, and now alternately ſunk him to melancholy, or urged him to deſpair. He lamented the paſt, and dreaded the future. Life had long ceaſed to be an enjoyment to him. Though hitherto he had baffled the intruding truth, remorſe now ſeized him.—He ſought about for his piſtols, and, being poſſeſſed of them, thought

thought to relieve himself; saying, "Fanny, "we meet." But the thought rushed in that Fanny was heavenly; the action accursed, and might separate them to eternity. He dashed the pistols from him, and determined to weather out his misery, till the natural moment of relief overtook him; and, from this time, seeking to dissipate the gloom of his mind, he frequented all places of diversion that country quarters afforded, till the most extraordinary hour of his life arrived. He was standing near a groupe of young ladies, at an assembly, where nought was distinctly visible to him, save the lights, on which he thoughtfully gazed.—Nought welcome to his ear, but the buz which assured him he was not alone. From this absent mood he was recalled by a voice sweeter than the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains; for it was like Fanny's.

He turned round aghaſt to the groupe from whence the voice came; but, hearing it not again, thought it was fancy, and endeavoured to conceal the emotion it had cauſed. But again the voice ſtruck his ear, and pierced his troubled heart. He forgot himſelf and the public room he was in; ruſhed to the lady that had uttered the well-known voice, and, ſeizing her by the ſhoulder, turned her ſwiftly round, to take a full view of her face. "It is Fanny!" exclaimed he:—but the words, "It is not "Fanny," ſoon dropt from his faltering tongue, in accents much lower. Yet he continued beholding her with a ſcrutiniſing look of aſtoniſhment, till ſhe was reſcued from him. He appeared agitated and ſhocked to a degree that moved all the company which ſtood around him with compaſſion. His ſtrength began to leave him, and his ſenſes to fail, when an elderly gentleman, tottering from a ſeat from which

which he had beheld the ſcene, tremblingly pronounced, "That Fanny, alas! may "be my loſt daughter; for ſuch was her "name, and ſhe was moſt like this her "ſiſter. Speak, ſtranger, ſpeak; and "give hope to a parent whom death has "lately ſtripped of many bleſſings; of all "I held dear, ſave this child whom you call "Fanny. Tell me, have I another left? "—can you reſtore her to me?"

Vernon's ſenſes returned. He was ſupported by Hamilton, and beheld the father of his much-injured Fanny requiring her at his hands; "And thus will it be," cried Vernon, "in a ſtill more awful day, when to "the great Judge of all I muſt plead "guilty.——Sir, I cannot reſtore your "daughter; ſhe is dead, and lies buried "beyond the Atlantic ocean, on a diſtant "ſhore." Then, ſpringing from the people whoſe care had hitherto aſſiſted him, he

ruſhed

ruſhed from the houſe, and, traverſing the ſtreets till the lone fields received him, leaned on the firſt gate his aching head. Hamilton was retained in the room by the tears and intreaties of Fanny's intereſting likeneſs, who begged from him ſome inſtant account of her ſiſter, as ſeveral of the officers who were at the aſſembly, on being applied to, had ſaid Hamilton knew beſt her hiſtory, as he had been her only friend. "And was you our Fanny's friend?" cried the young lady. "Oh, come with us, "and tell us if it is not poſſible that the "report of her death may be a miſtake." Hamilton ſaid every thing in a minute; ſtill looking to the door after Vernon; and at laſt, abſolutely tearing himſelf out of the father and daughter's hands, ran down ſtairs to look for Vernon's ſervant, whom he ſent after him; and then went home in their carriage with Mr. and Miſs Herbert, giving them a brief and exculpating account

count of Vernon's behaviour to Fanny: while the reſt of the officers, whoſe advice and example had thus involved Vernon, loudly exclaimed againſt him as a raſcal and betrayer; and certain it is that the affair had never appeared in that light to them, till they found out that the victim was a rich perſon's child. Then every paſſion roſe up in her favour; and her youth, her innocence, her love, made Vernon appear cruel, treacherous, and unmanly: and thus for once did riches caſt a right light upon truth, while the ſad fate of many a poor man's child lay buried in oblivion, for want of ſuch an illuſtration.

The officers, after proper deliberation, according to their phraſe, voted Vernon to Coventry; but he came no more among them, and Hamilton only ſought after him; but could not trace him beyond an old barn, where he had diſturbed ſome

ſleeping

ſleeping beggars by his mournful prayers. They ſat up in their beds, and, holding each other's hand, liſtened to him as ſomething preternatural, till the moon ſhining through a part of the unroofed top bright on his regimentals, ſhewed Vernon leaning againſt a poſt that propped ſome ſinking boards; the beggars lay down again to ſleep, and in the morning he was gone, and ſome years elapſed before his fate came to their knowledge.

In the mean time Hamilton was married to Maria Herbert, Fanny's youngeſt ſiſter, who was become the heireſs of her houſe, by the untimely deaths of her ſiſter and brother, who Hamilton found was his beloved ſchool-fellow, Marmaduke Herbert. Hamilton was happy, but not unchecked with regret at not having exerted himſelf more powerfully in Fanny's behalf.

On the evening of a day in which they had fully diſcuſſed the ſubject, walking in Fanny's Garden, where many ſhrubs of her planting were yet counted, Hamilton received a letter from one of the ſerjeants, informing him, that he had ſeen Vernon's name, age, and death marked in a church-yard belonging to a ſmall village in Cornwall, that overlooked the ſea. Thither flew Hamilton, and, by the ſexton's means, traced him to the farm-houſe from which he was buried. They could give no farther account than that he came a ſtranger to the neighbouring port; where, waiting for a paſſage to a particular part of America, he was overtaken by a rapid conſumption, and removed to them for air and quiet: that he died, deſiring the remainder of the money he brought with him might, after his burial, be diſtributed among poor women of the name of Frances.

Tears ſtood in Hamilton's eyes when he heard this laſt tribute to his unfortunate loved ſiſter's memory. He aſked with an emotion that would ſcarce permit him, "Whether his friend appeared happy? "His poor friend," he then called him, and gave way to the pang of nature. He was cheerful, they ſaid, good to the poor, and attentive to church, which he told them he ſhould have been aſhamed of, had he remained with his old acquaintances, whoſe bad example, more than their advice, had brought him to the ſtate he was in.

Among his papers Hamilton found one written the day before he died, which proved him to be leſs happy than the good people ſuppoſed.

The morning Hamilton left the village, his horſes waited long for him in the church-yard ſhade, while he, reſting on a grave

graverail oppoſite to Vernon's, recalled his good qualities, palliated the bad, and regretted that he had not had it in his power to pay the laſt duties to either of his deceaſed friends; caſting then a painful look acroſs the vaſt element, on the diſtant ſhores of which the divided pair lay buried, hoped, in the romantic waywardneſs of his heart, that the myſterious ſyſtem of hereafter might permit the ſorrowing ſpirits to leave the ſmall precincts of their nightly haunts, and that, meeting on the great deep, they might unite in forgiveneſs.

THE

THE SOMERSETSHIRE STORY.

THE SOMERSETSHIRE STORY.

THE long vacation having releaſed Mr. Delay's family from London, the careful mother put ſix of her children in one coach, under the care of Mira, their eldeſt ſiſter, and, ſeating herſelf in a poſt-chaiſe, with the youngeſt child in her arms, and the houſe-keeper by her ſide, followed them, deſcanting on houſehold affairs all the way.

They

They were deſtined to a cottage in the weſt, encompaſſed with fields and woods, where the children had played many a gambol the year before, and now, in the ſweet reliſh of youth, were recounting them over again, and anticipating the delight of thoſe to come: "For," ſaid Polly, the ſecond daughter (who was but lately eſcaped from ſchool, though full grown) "you will "find nothing but happineſs in the coun- "try; for there, inſtead of ſtaying within "a dark ſmoky houſe from week's end to "week's end, with back-boards and the "care of dreſſed hair, we may bound into "green fields among the flowers and ſheep; "be blown by the freſh winds, and jump "to catch at fruit on the loaded trees." —"Ah, ſiſter," cried the youngeſt, puſhing her little muſlin bonnet back, and looking as wiſhfully up in her face as if ſhe had already beheld the fruit, "pray "beg mama never to take us back to

" take us back to London, but to let us " ſtay in the light among the cherry trees, " and the lambs, and the flowers." And, charmed by Polly's account, and elated by the ſcenes of nature through which they had already paſſed, all that were youthful eagerly joined in the requeſt. Polly promiſed them ſhe would, gravely repeating, that, " to be ſure happineſs was only to " found in the country." A faint ſmile dwelt on the patient face of Mira, who had hitherto been remarkably ſilent, and a ſigh gave her words, while conſciouſly glancing back towards London, ſhe diſſented from her ſiſter's opinion, adding, with a penſive inclination of her head to Polly's refuting countenance, " I am older " than you, ſiſter."—" And books are " older than you, Miſs," returned Polly; " to them and my own experience I will " truſt; for they prove that certain happi- " neſs is in the country."—" May my

" deareſt Polly meet with it every where," cried Mira, preſſing her hand, " but ſhe " will be moſt likely to poſſeſs it, if, while " young, ſhe truſts to the experience of " her friends rather than the picture of a " poet, or the warmth of her own dear " imagination."—" Mira, I love to mind " what you ſay," cried Polly; " but yet " I cannot but believe that happineſs is " always to be found in the country. Now " only mind if I am once unhappy all the " ſummer." They arrived ſafe at their cottage: but had no ſooner entered it than, with Polly for their leader, the children all turned out again into the garden, where they found every thing flouriſhing and lovely, and where they ſpent the chief part of their time, exulting in the fine weather and rural ſcenes about them. But few bright ſuns had ſhone on their days of liberty ere hapleſs Miſs Polly, being ſent by her mother to the ſtore room to get ſome preſerved

ſerved fruits for ſupper, ſet her candle on a ſhelf, immediately above which was another, and, on hearing the noiſe of ſome rats behind the boards, ſuddenly ran up ſtairs to her mother, to whom ſhe delivered the preſerves, and then, with all the freakiſh evolutions of a foreſt colt, danced off to the nurſery to play with the children, forgetful of the candle, which firſt ſmoked, then dried, and finally ſet fire to the ſhelf. Never was ſo tranquil a ſcene more dreadfully interrupted. Mira had long been leaning on her chamber window, liſtening to the diſtant rural noiſes, and was juſt obſerving that the moon almoſt dimmed the glow-worm, while the pearly dew drops, reflecting her light, ſhone like them, when this ſeat of content burſt into flames.

An old maid ſervant, whom faithful ſervices had inveſted with ſome authority in the family, inſtantly taxed Polly with hav-

ing left her candle, which ſhe miſſed from her firſt coming up ſtairs. Polly recollected and confeſſed it; but from the violent rage of the maid ſhe dreaded ſtill more the anger of her parents, and determined to periſh in the fire.

In a few moments the houſe was left by every one but Polly, who remained bundleing up and throwing from the windows every thing of value that the time would allow; for the fire which was at the bottom of the houſe, ſoon burſt out of the lower windows, and, mounting upwards, envelopped the whole. But Polly (heartſtung by ſome words which had fallen from the maid during the firſt torrent of her paſſion, about her mother loving her, prophecying that ſhe would bring miſchief on the family, and wiſhing her dead) ſtill kept her reſolution of remaining in the houſe till it ſunk in upon her; and went to the

dining room to take a laſt farewel look from the window of her brothers and ſiſters, who, with all the family, were aſſembled in the garden beholding the deſtruction of their houſe.

Polly approached the window, and appeared to them through the flames, which flared up on the outſide of the houſe, as if ſhe was in them. She ſtood there ſome time, and, looking ſerene, with a radiance about her from the ſtrong reflection of the light, it ſtruck the beholders as ſomething preternatural. Yet, knowing her face, and that ſhe was miſſing, it drew ſcreams of horror from the men as well as women.

They could give no help; and clouds of ſmoke intervening, they ſaw her no longer, nor no more. But as the beams began to crack and give way, Polly's reſolution vaniſhed. She flew to the win-

dows, but ſmoke and flames repelled her at every one. She called for aſſiſtance; and her cries were diſtinguiſhed amid the craſh of the falling houſe. But ſhe had reached the ſervants' brick ſtair caſe, at the foot of which was the dairy, a long ſtone-built arch. There ſhe tried to go; but was nearly ſuffocated in the attempt, and retreated for breath. But, before ſhe had gone too far, the front of the houſe fell in; when plucking out her pocket handkerchief, ſhe kept it tight to her mouth and noſe, and in that manner reached the dairy door. It was locked; but Polly remedied the caſe in a moment, and burſt it open, with a ſtrength ſhe did not in the leaſt know ſhe had been miſtreſs of. After taking breath in this cool place, into which, nevertheleſs, volumes of ſmoke had followed her, ſhe went to the fartheſt end, and, breaking down a lattice, got out unſeen, and took her way immediately acroſs the fields, to-

wards

wards the high road, ſtill keeping her reſolution of never appearing again before her mother, who, the maid had unwarrantably aſſerted, wiſhed her dead.

Polly, with all the courage of an irritated mind, in the high paſſion of a new reſolve, entered a thick and gloomy wood, which, even in the day time, had been an object of terror to her. She followed a cart-way through it, till ſhe reached the great weſtern road; but then knew not which way to turn; and while doubting, though without argument for or againſt, ſunk down in an agony of ſorrow and deſpair.

Her mother and ſiſters, in the mean time, forgetting every misfortune but the loſs of her, who they thought burnt, were conducted to a neighbouring farm-houſe. But by no means could the old ſervant, who

had made uſe of the paſſionate expreſſions, be removed from the ruins. She knew Polly's temper, and how deep any reproach ſunk in her mind, from a jealouſy which ſeemed to have grown up with her from her earlieſt infancy, that ſhe was hated, or leſs liked than the reſt of her brothers and ſiſters.

The nurſe remained by the ruins all night, ſometimes liſtening if any voice could be heard; at others walking round, calling to her young miſtreſs, and, rightly judging that her loſs was owing to the cruel words, aſſured her in broken accents that her mother loved her dearly.

But we muſt return to Polly, and trace the hardſhips which followed as puniſhments due for the indulgence of her irreverent reſentment. She aroſe from her fit of grief, and, with aſſumed reſolution, again viewed

viewed her path to new ſcenes which night yet rendered obſcure and impenetrable, as the proſpect of her future life. But ſtill ſtanding at the ſide of the road, ſhe knew not which way to turn, till, recollecting that London was to the right, ſhe turned to the left.

Conſcious that after what ſhe was doing ſhe was no more worthy of her friends, and thought ſhe could not fly too far from them, ſhe walked on in great ſilence, till a rumbling noiſe overtook her:—Fear then told her of the want of friends; that ſhe was defenceleſs and liable to every ill that could happen. She ran behind ſome buſhes that grew in cluſters by the road ſide, and, waiting ſilent as death for the coming miſchief, ſaw the Taunton ſtage coach paſs by. She thought of calling to the man to take a paſſenger; but ſhe was a culprit behind a buſh, debating and irreſolute, while the

ſtage continued its progreſs. As ſoon as it was out of reach, cruel reaſon reurged the neceſſity of what ſhe had at firſt propoſed, and regret ſeized poor Polly for not having put it in execution. She ſet out full ſpeed after it; but opportunity neglected, like the Taunton ſtage coach, is not at our pleaſure to be overtaken.

A chaiſe and four ſoon after followed, but it was ſpiked behind. Another paſſed, but there were ſervants following it on horſeback. A fourth came, but it was loaded high with baggage.

"No opportunity like the firſt," ſaid Polly, in deſpair; when a coach arrived that had a cuſhion behind it for the footman to ſtand on, who happily was abſent. Polly failed not to ſeat herſelf on it in a moment, and, by getting down at every place where they changed horſes, and pru-

dently

dently walking on till the chaiſe overtook her again, ſhe managed to be conveyed in this manner about thirty miles.

At break of day they ſtopped in a ſmall town where there were two inns; at one Polly bought ſome biſcuits, which, with ſome lemons that lay in the bar window, was all the victuals that could be got at ſo early. She retired behind a cart to eat them, ſtill feeling herſelf a criminal in every thing ſhe did: and the very hogs in the yard, as if ſenſible of her fallen ſtate, chuſing to rout in the ground juſt where ſhe ſtood, drove her from her ſhelter, without her daring to reſiſt.

She ſaw the chaiſe ſet out, but did not venture to mount again, it being day-light, and wandered along the town, till ſhe ſaw a ſickly-looking woman, who appeared to be half aſleep, opening a little ſhop, on

the counter of which lay ſome coarſe ſtraw hats. Polly was, as ſhe had ſet out, without hat, cloak, or gloves; but in her pocket ſhe had a guinea, two crown pieces, and three ſixpences. She purchaſed one of the largeſt of the hats, and immediately put it on, to her great conſolation; for as ſhe became more decent in her appearance, ſhe felt herſelf leſs culpable, and miſtreſs enough of her thoughts to project, as ſhe walked along, ſome ſcheme for procedure. She thought ſhe was not yet far enough from home: but firmly refrained from tears, while ſhe determined to go into the fartheſt part of Somerſetſhire.

The Taunton ſtage coach, which the poſt chaiſe had out-travelled, ſoon after arrived, and, while changing horſes, Polly took a place in the baſket, not venturing the inſide, leſt ſome of the paſſengers might know her. There happened to be no other

perſon

perſon in the baſket, and Polly, aſhamed of her ſituation, lay down, in the bottom to conceal herſelf.

At Saliſbury the coach ſtopped ſome time, and ſhe bought ſeveral articles of dreſs to ſuit herſelf for a country ſervant, and when ſhe got into the baſket again paid the coachman beforehand, that ſhe might get down when ſhe choſe, unknown to any body, by which means ſhe could not be traced, but preſerved to herſelf the power (even if her family did find that ſhe had eſcaped the fire) of keeping the reſt of her fate a myſtery, indulging a deſire which frequently takes place in romantic minds,—of being regretted when gone, injured, and thought paſt all recovery.

After many a mile in her ſhaking conveyance, Polly, almoſt ſcorched to death, raiſed her head above the rim of the baſket,

to

to ſee what new world ſhe might be come into. A few thatched houſes at ſome diſtance, attracted her notice, and ſhe determined to try her fortune among them. The jump from the baſket increaſed both a ſickneſs and head-ach, which the heat and roughneſs of the conveyance had occaſioned ſo much, that ſhe could ſcarcely riſe on her trembling legs, which, by the cramped manner in which ſhe had ſo long ſat (in order to keep her head out of ſight) were rendered almoſt uſeleſs. She looked about for ſome place to lean on; but a ditch on one ſide, and a hedge on the other, compelled her to keep the duſty road, without relief, in a ſtate of diſguſt and drought that cannot eaſily be conceived. She looked in vain over the ditch on her right hand for a cool and refreſhing ſight of the fields; for they were all ſcorched brown, and ſurrounded by the unnatural encloſure of low, barren-looking dirt or ſtone walls; within which

which were a number of tormented, fly-bitten cattle, galloping about in ſearch of ſhade and water. "Oh, Mira! Mira! "where is my happineſs?" ſaid Polly, as ſhe deſcended towards the huts; but ſoon a gate at her left hand opened to a proſpect that the hedge had hitherto hid from her ſight.

She leant on the gate, and enjoyed the balmy influence that the deep verdure of a ſwampy vale, well fraught with running waters, has on the aching eyes of a ſummer traveller. She wiſhed to be in the midſt of it, to taſte its waters, and tread the ſoft, cool turf. She was not long in deſcending to it, though her arrival was delayed by deviating much to the left; for there, at the head of a ſpring, was a little covert of willow trees, about which, however, Polly had no conſideration, or intended going to, her mind being ſo entirely engroſſed

groſſed with her ſchemes for procedure in the village: but a ſingle object in a large ſpace is not only attractive to the gazer, but the feet of minds the moſt abſent will carry them towards it. So it was with Polly, who reached a ſpot never to be quitted at this ſeaſon of the year but with regret.

The guſhing water awakened her to its wild beauty. She firſt taſted that, and then, like a nymph in a ſong, ſat on its bank crowned with willows, or, what was much better, ſhaded by them. She watched the ſtraying waters too; for ſhe found that looking on that cool element eaſed her head-ach. But that gone, thoughts more diſtracting ſucceeded: the great diſtance ſhe was from home, every mile of which was an additional weight on her pained mind. She roſe to look at the fartheſt part of the road, which lay winding in

ſight,

ſight, on a diſtant heath.—She wiſhed ſhe had not paſſed it.—Her head recoiled back, and trouble bowed it down on one of the willow trees, where remorſe for having left home was vented in tears, and loud, though unheard, lamentations and ſelf-reproaches. A calm ſucceeded this, and ſleep followed. She awoke another being, —her head clear, and ſtomach keen.—She began to prepare for the village: ſhe pulled down her high head; flung cuſhion, gauze cap, and all into the brook, except the blue ribband, which ſhe ſaved to tie round a neat cap with a cambric border, which ſhe had bought at the town where ſhe purchaſed her brown cloak and hat:—a checked apron, blue ſtockings, and leather ſhoes were now taken out of her bundle, and put on.

Being thus equipped for her *entré*, ſhe went along the low grounds, inſtead of returning

returning to the road, and, obſerving a fine crop of water-creſſes had overgrown the brook, ſhe thought the ſelling them would be a good introduction into the village, and following the ſimplicity of that thought, gathered her apronful, and cried them as ſoon as ſhe got among the houſes. Every window had a head popt out to look and wonder at the prodigy; but Polly, not looking behind her, was ignorant of the train of eyes ſhe had drawn after her; and, as ſhe had ſeen done about London, went to the doors, and offered her creſſes to ſell. But the people, laughing, ſaid, if they wanted creſſes, they ſhould go to the brook and gather them themſelves; and aſked her if ever ſhe had heard of ſuch a thing before, as any body buying water-creſſes? She was ſhocked.—But what did ſhe feel when a loud laugh induced her to look behind, and ſhe found herſelf to be the object of every eye in the village? She flung down

the

the creſſes which had betrayed her to their deriſion, and haſtily walked out at the other end of the ſtreet.

She purſued her way for ſeveral miles as if the village had purſued her, which ſhe was not quite free from the fear of, often looking behind her, and then redoubling her pace. At length an aſſemblage of huts more wretched than the laſt appeared; this place ſhe thought well ſuited her fortune, and no one here could ſcoff at her for poverty or ignorance. She enquired at every door for work; and after being much ſtared at for a nice, clean maiden, was employed by a linman to tend hemp while bleaching, for which ſhe was allowed four pence a day, out of which ſhe paid a ſhilling a week for lodging. Judge of her fare, judge of her reflections from five in the morning till ſix at night while watching her hemp, which was ſpread on the ſide of a hill, at the higheſt

prat

part of which Polly uſed to ſit, in order to have the whole in view through ſome trees. She could ſee the London road; and every one ſhe ſaw travelling that way brought tears into her eyes. Every bird that ſang ſhe envied; for tho' her own voice was ſweet, ſhe had not harmony enough in her mind to permit it utterance. She converſed with none, in ſilence watched her hemp, took her pay at night, retired to her chamber, fell on her ragged bed, and cried herſelf to ſleep. The greateſt pleaſure ſhe then had was ſatisfying her hunger with coarſe bread baked on cabbage leaves and ſkim cheeſe, which ſhe uſed to chew leiſurely, that the entertainment might laſt the longer; but when once ſhe began her dinner, ſhe found it impoſſible to leave off, but finiſhed her two penny-worth of victuals, and when ſupper time came ſhe was comfortleſs, for ſhe never had experinced ſo good an appetite in her life. A penny worth was indeed but a ſcanty portion

tion for one placed in a keen air ſo many hours. Thus did Polly paſs her miſerable hours on the Downs, with an aching heart and an aching ſtomach too. The great tranſitions of the weather alſo, which happen in autumn, from heat to cold, ſhe experinced not unfeelingly; for ſometimes on the ſame day the aching fingers of the morning were bliſtered by the mid-day ſun. Acroſs the hill ran a hedge, about the middle of which was a very ancient hollow tree, under which Polly uſed to ſit, and into which ſhe uſed to retire when it was rainy: along this buſhy hedge (the wild product of which uſed to afford her ſome amuſement, and ſmall additions of fruit to her meals,) Polly uſed to walk backward and forward for many long hours in the week, indulging melancholy and dear thoughts about home, met only by the high winds, interrupted only by anxious care, and every now and then giving a look to ſee that all

her

her hemp was ſafe; but one ſad day when the wind blew hard, Polly retired to the old tree, wrapping her cloak tight round her, and hoping to brave the weather by giving a looſe to meditation, fixed her eyes, (regardleſs of every thing on the Downs) on a diſtant tower, which had been erected to the beloved memory of Alfred the Great; but tears ſoon intercepted all outward objects, and ſome people at the bottom of the hill, not ſeeing her as uſual walking along the hedge, thought her abſent, and ſtole a large quantity of hemp; nor till hunger called home her thouhts did Polly perceive the diſaſter: riſing then and wiping her eyes, ſhe as uſual ſurveyed the ground, and beheld the dreadful vacancy for ſome moments in that kind of aſtoniſhment that did not at firſt permit her to underſtand the full force of her misfortune; but they were ſhort moments, and ſtrugling for utterance, ſhe cried, What

now is to become of me? I thought I was too low for misfortune; but in the worſt of my life I never was beat, or in a priſon, and now perhaps they both await me—Ah, what would I give to be in the happy ſtate that I was five minutes ago! Sure it was the envious devil—Or, ſaid ſhe, falling on her knees, is it not from a more righteous power, inflicted on me as a judgement for having left home? Providence then will no longer protect me: I may ſeek, but ſhall never find ſhelter more; then looking at the fatal place, and all round the hill, and no comfort appearing, ſhe wrung her hands, and determined to run away: ſo ready is a ſecond fault to ſucceed the firſt: and ſhe ſet out, on a guſt of wind making the old tree creak, forgetting even the baſket that contained her bread and cheeſe, and with light heels and lighter ſtomach, the winds helping her over the hills, was out of ſight in a moment; but coming to the end of the lane,

lane, met her maſter's ſon, while the dread of ſeeing her maſter was ſo great, that the mere ſeeing one from his houſe brought him ſo to her mind, that ſhe thought it was himſelf, and as ſoon as the ſon met her, ſhe fainted at his feet. The young man was of a ſpecious character, and though naturally as brutal as his father, age had not yet hardened all his feelings to the ſame degree, for he felt ſome compaſſion at ſeeing her look as if ſhe was dead, and forbore kicking and beating her as he at firſt intended when he ſaw her abſent from her duty. After ſhoving her about with his foot ſhe came to herſelf; then he lifted her up, and aſſuming the ſympathiſing note, enquired what ſo cruely frightened her. Surpriſed by the unexpected gentleneſs of his manners, and relying on his good nature, ſhe confeſſed the truth to him. He was ſilent a few moments, conſidering how it might be turned to advantage. The chief fruit of his conſideration was, that

ſhe

ſhe had certainly no money to make amends, and that blood could not be had out of a poſt, ſo that it was better to let her go; which information he gave Polly in the guiſe of forgiveneſs, and a proof of his regard. But what chiefly ſecured this mercy to her was his recollecting that there was a weeks wages owing to her, and thus it was ſaved; but Polly ever retained the kindeſt remembrance of him for his generoſity in forgiving her, his tenderneſs, and good behavior while talking to her, his compaſſion in permitting her to eſcape from his father; every thing was dwelt upon, every thing was magnified to his advantage: and in the ſame manner do all young and inexperienced women judge of plauſible behaviour; for this very good, handſome young man would either have hanged or tranſported her (for the ſmalleſt proſpect of gain,) had it been in his power, as may be deduced from his having exerted his utmoſt endeavours to

inflict one of those punishments on a poor mother of three children at their last assizes. But of that Polly was ignorant; and recollecting that she had no money, asked of him a few halfpence; he said, he was very sorry he had none, nor gold or silver either about him, or she should have been heartily welcome to as much as she pleased.

Polly believed him, and making the most affecting acknowledgements of his goodness to her, they shook hands and parted; her cheeks traced with tears of gratitude, he impudently and insolently deriding her as soon as she turned her back, to begin a progress she knew not whither; and not so happy as he who watered his bread with his tears, for she had no bread.

Misfortunes, providentially for their remedy,

medy, render the generality of people more grave and conſiderate; while the gay remain unwarned, and the gloomy encourage their tendency to welcome ſome imaginary woe, in addition to the real one which has already awakened their complaints.

Polly was weigh'd down to the latter deſcription; and from a general regret, ſinking of her heart, and dear wiſh for ſome friend in diſtreſs, cheriſhed an idea that ſhe was in love with Hanlem, and wandered with it warm at her heart for ſome miles over bleak downs: the path ſhe followed led to a ſtile, which gave entrance to a plantation of tall young trees. She ſat down on the footſtep, and began to conſider what ſhe ſhould do; for home, though the dear object of her daily contemplation, now ſtruck leſs forcibly on her mind: her pride too, not yet enough

ſubdued by misfortune, roſe more powerful than the moving thought of again ſeeing home, and her fears increaſed on account of the miſcief ſhe had occaſioned; and yet, ſaid ſhe, ſoftening into tears, it is a long two months ſince, and all that time in miſery; ſure they wou'd forgive me: Oh! heavenly happineſs, to think of ſeeing my father again; to ſee his ſurpriſe at my return, as it were, from the dead, me whom he muſt ſo long have thought returned in aſhes to the earth.—But my mother, ſhe would not be glad to ſee me; how then can I go to her? ſhe wiſhed me dead, and ſo to her will I remain; for to love all but me, who loved her ſo well, was hard indeed. No, I never can return, ſince there is no welcome from my mother; ſo fields and woods, I ſeek my fortune amongſt ye, for you cannot afford me worſe than a mother's wiſh: but inſtead of ſetting out, ſhe leant her head back on the bars of the ſtile,

ſtile, and fixing her eyes on the waving tops of ſome high trees, amongſt which the wind roar'd like a diſtant ſounding ſhore, ſhe remained there ruminating, reaſoning and lamenting, till the ſun was far weſtward, and the ſounding footſteps of a lone traveller invaded the ſtill ſcene; ſhe ſtarted up, and ſaw approaching an ill-looking old ſoldier, with a club in his hand. Now, thought ſhe, forgetting that ſhe was a beggar, ſhall I be robbed and murdered—ſhe flung herſelf over the ſtile, and with the ſwiftneſs of youth and fear, reached the wood ſide before he could overtake her; ſhe ruſhed in amongſt the thickeſt of the foilage; but entangled with briers, and apprehenſive of treading on ſome venomous creature, ſhe did not go far, but ſtood hugging to her beating heart ſome hazel boughs, while her face was turned back to look for the old ſoldier,

who

who fortunately being bad ſighted from the loſs of one eye, gave over the purſuit thro' the boughs. Polly ſaw him turn off, and coming cautiouſly from her hiding place, ſaid, looking on each ſide, now I ſee all the dangers which ſurround me—can I ever eſcape them?—Then ſtanding up to ſee the length of her ſhadow, a method ſhe had learnt during her rural occupations, found it was about five o'clock; forward then ſhe was obliged to go, or be overtaken by darkneſs; but ſhe knew not where to find either houſe, hut, or human creature; nor which way any town or village lay. She had heard talk of the great town of Taunton, but knew not how many miles off it lay, or whether north or ſouth; and though ſhe had in the courſe of her eſcape paſſed ſome houſes, none now were in view; ſo that how to direct her courſe, ſhe knew not. In this ſituation ſhe

remained

remained till the ſun went quite down, and the wind ſprung up afreſh. She roſe with ſome ſpirit, and followed the path through the plantation; but this ſoon ended, and again the bare Downs lay all before her; but a few miles acroſs there was a part of them which ſeemed ſkirted with hedges and trees, amongſt them Polly hoped to find ſome human dwelling, and expecting that the great degree of light which the ſetting ſun had left, would laſt her there, ſhe ſet out; but, alas, the (in appearance) few miles turned out many, and when half way on her taſk, ſhe found herſelf in the midſt of depths and ſlopes that were yet to lengthen her way four fold, but ſhe ran down ſteeps and ſcrambled up the oppoſite ſides with great eagerneſs, till want of breath on the top of one ſhe had juſt aſcended, obliged her to ſit down, but how diſ-

agreeable did the ſublime height ſhe had attained appear, covered with a ſmall black herbage, and giving view to dreary bottoms and barren-ſided ſteps; the birds were all gone to reſt, and not even a tinkling ſheep's bell was heard; ſilence reigned; not a cloud in the blue, extenſive horizon, which bounded the ſcene, and woe-fraught Polly began to look round her for ſome lonely human creature.

Her reaſon was now completely bewildered; fancy and fear uniting, metamorphoſed a little withered juniper tree, not a foot high, into the old ſoldier who had purſued her. She flew to a chalk run, that the laſt rains had waſhed along like a path, which providentially led to a bottom in which there was an old road that went to the downs. There was yet light enough to ſhew the trees and hedges which had firſt induced her to ſet out: and now by one bold

bold look behind, being freed from the ſpectre of the old ſoldier, ſhe began to look about for the houſes ſhe expected. But four fields were paſſed, and no cheering appearance of that ſort.

The way now lay up a ſteep hill, and the path became ſcarce viſible: but, though hopeleſs, ſhe walked on, ſometimes ſtopped by the lowing of a cow, ſhaking of a buſh, or diſtant bark of a dog, which tantalized as well as ſtartled her; becauſe ſhe knew not how to get to them.

Diſſappointed in her expectations of houſes, ſome lonely barn was now the object of her ſearch, and ſhe walked till ſhe came to a high-ſituated field, up in a dry corner of which, ſhaded by two thick hedges, ſtood part of an old hay rick, left by ſome ſlovenly farmer to the mercy of cows and ſheep.—Though there was part

of a broken rail, which kept the cows at a little diſtance, the ſheep had undermined it, and were laid in the cavities they had made on that ſide that ſheltered them from the wind; the cows too were on that ſide: but Polly, not quite ſo weather-wiſe, comforted herſelf that they had left one ſide free for her, and, pulling down a little hay, followed the example of the ſheep, and laid herſelf as much under the rick as poſſible, for the ſake of warmth: but little of that did ſhe enjoy, as the wind blew full upon her, and no ſleep could ſhe get; and riſing then with the moſt uncharitable intention, ſhe went round to the ſheltered ſide, and driving out two or three ſheep, took their warm place, with others lying cloſe by her, and, pulling hay, made a very good bed, and a ſound happy ſleep followed till towards morning, when the rain beat violently on her, and ſhe awoke, much ſurpriſed to find all her rural companions

gone,

gone, and that ſhe was not in the leaſt ſheltered from the wind or rain. Immediately it ſtruck her, that the wind had changed, and thoſe ſagacious creatures alſo their ſituation, and, being now leſs pleaſed with their abſence than preſence, and rather uneaſy at the conſtant barking of the dog ſhe had heard before, ſhe roſe, and had no ſooner turned the firſt corner than ſhe ſaw all the aforeſaid company; but it being dark, as ſhe endeavoured to get among them, ſhe ſtumbled over a little black Welch cow, which cauſed ſome diſturbance, but Polly puſhed on, and got in among the ſheep under the rick again, where ſhe lay down till morning; when the wind and rain having ſubſided, ſhe ſaw from the high grounds on which ſhe was, a ſight ſeldom enjoyed by Londoners,—the eaſt all roſy, ſtreaked with purple and bright edged clouds; the horizon, extenſive, bounded by diſtant mountains, and,

the intermediate country becoming viſible, woods as yet looked dark, and hedges like black lines.—The redneſs of the ſky terrified her;—but, having ſeen the ſun ſet, on ſecond thoughts, believed it might be going to riſe, and waited on her knees to ſee it; but ſo much more intereſting is the meaneſt trifle relating to ſelf than the moſt glorious circumſtance relating to all nature, that Polly, though ſhe had a mind well ſuited to contemplate this grand ſcene, was in a moment detatched from it by the riſing of the black cow, which, with a much more lively emotion of joy, ſhe diſcovered to be a milch one. "Oh! for a mug," cried ſhe, "to milk my breakfaſt in." And ſought about for a broken pan, or bottle to milk in; but no ſuch thing being found, ſhe had recourſe to a method ſhe had learned in play at her father's country houſe,—milking in her hand and then drinking it. Thus ſhe had nearly finiſhed

a tolerable

a tolerable breakfaſt, of which ſhe ſtood in great need, when the cow boys came hollowing up the hill, which was a lucky warning, or Polly had been caught. So returning round the rick; from thence ſhe crept to the hedge, and, forcing her way in, ſhe remained hid among the boughs, wet from the late rain. "Ah! cold "friends," ſaid ſhe, "you ſhall not long "drop your advice upon me to be gone;" and, as ſoon as the boys were out of ſight, came forth, and began afreſh her walk, carefully avoiding the farmer's houſe, the roof of which ſhe now ſaw among ſome trees at the foot of the hill, and, conſcious of the theft on their cow, left the path, and paſſed over hedge and ditch the other way, expecting to be purſued with the dog ſhe had heard bark all night, if it was found out that the cow had been milked. She purſued her journey rather rapidly till noon, when paſſing over a green, on which was

a large

a large dunghill, ſhe ſaw on it a tall young girl ſearching among it for rubbiſh. Her face ſtruck Polly as not unlike the dutcheſs of ———, whom ſhe had often ſeen in public. In the courſe of her ſearch, the girl's eyes were turned towards Polly, who was ſurpriſed to find the likeneſs finiſhed by eyes ſhe had thought incomparable, and forgot her own ſituation in contemplating the very different ones of two people ſo much alike: the one immerſed in pomp and luxury; the other in the refuſe of the world: the one either drawn in a ſplendid carriage, or repoſing, fatigued with nothing, on a ſoft ſatin ſopha, decked with lace and jewels, and delicate to a degree of diſguſt, at every thing that approached not to perfection, and, perhaps, at that moment, turning with a loathing, though empty ſtomach, from delicacies ſerved in the fineſt plate: the other without ſhoes or ſtockings, ſtooping over the ſtrong per-

fume

ſume of an old routed dunghill, eager for its treaſures, and ready to ſnatch at any old cruſt that might be turned up in the rumage. Yet Nature's own daughters had grown up alike; their eyes were equally dark, and even ſpeaking; but the language of their tongues, form'd by education, differed ſo widely, that the charm of ſemblance almoſt vaniſhed when the young girl, with out-pouting mouth, pronounced the following words: "Why what doſt "thee ſtare at zo; thouſt know I again "zure when doſt zee me again?"

Polly told her ſhe was loſt, and aſked the way to Taunton.—"Taunton!" ſaid the girl, "Oh, Taunton! why if you be go-"ing to Taunton, you be a great way "off."—"How far, pray?"—"How "far, why I don't rightly know how far; "but it is a great way.—Pray, how long "haſt thou been loſt."—"A day and a night,"

"night," returned Polly.—"What! and "theeſt had no victuals?"—"No; none "but a little milk."—"Then, if thee "willſt go wi' me, thee ſhalt ha zome and "welcome."

Polly looked up to her benificent friend on the hill, and, with a reduced voice, thanked her, and preſumed to aſk, how long it would be before ſhe returned home? "Why, ſoon as I ha' filled this here baſ- "ket: caſtent help me a bit?"—"Oh, "yes," ſaid Polly, "with all my heart, "if you will be ſo good as to ſhew me "how?" and was immediately taught to pick a dunghill; that is, what was worthy of ſeparating from it. All the time Polly was attentive, humble, and grateful.—The girl, won by that ſweetneſs of manners, the effect of which ſhe had never felt be- fore, did not repent of her promiſe, though ſhe began to think what her mother would

ſay,

ſay to her; and was determined, if ſhe refuſed her ſuccour, to ſteal ſome victuals for her; and give her a penny; for, during their work, Polly had told her the latter part of her ſtory, and that ſhe had not a ſingle farthing in the world; and now it muſt be told that this young dutcheſs had a private fortune of ſeventeen pence, that was unknown to her mother, and which ſhe had ſaved ever ſince ſhe was nine years of age. It began with a ſixpence given her by a lady riding through a gate ſhe opened for her, and, in ſeven years, had accumulated to the ſum mentioned.

Having reached her home, (which Polly, from a reſpect her face and benevolence had impreſſed her with, was ſurpriſed to find an old barn) ſhe introduced Polly to her mother and a numerous ſet of acquaintances, pedlars, baſket-makers, cabbage-netters; the laſt trade Polly was learning,

after ſome weeks ſtay with them, when a party of ſhoeleſs young ladies engaged her to go and rob farmer Simonds' orchard, telling her it was only to peckſel, which is that kind of right in an orchard which poor people claim in a corn-field after the harveſt is over; and Polly, underſtanding it in that ſenſe, ſtrictly adhered to the word gleaning, and contented herſelf with the windfall and blighted apples ſhe found on the ground, while the others enriched themſelves from the trees. All the old wood too that Polly could find, ſhe put in her apron, pleaſing herſelf with the thoughts of a good fire at night, and apple pudding for ſupper; when lo! the farmer was at their heels with a large ſounding horſe-whip: ſome flew over the hedge; ſome into the ditch, where they lay ſnug, while others remained ſtill and ſilent as death up in the trees:—but poor Polly, unuſed to any of theſe manœuvres, was overtaken,

and

and the farmer, who was of a fierce nature, quickened by reſentment at having his orchard much damaged lately, thought he had now got one of the night thieves, and began beating her unmercifully, his whip in one hand, and holding her at arm's length with the other, In the ſcuffle her old brown hat fell off, and diſcovered not as he expected, a coarſe, hardened, brown, drunken phiz, and gipſey-wrinkled throat, but a ſweet, ſoft, innocent face, hung down on her boſom, with the tears for ſuch hard uſage rolling down her reſigned countenance, he withheld his uplifted arm, and ſlackening his hold, which had been very faſt, expecting a ſtout reſiſtance, exclaimed, "Why, what the devil are you? I took "you for one of Jack Daniel's girls:— "what do you come thieving here for?" Polly, looking up with great fear at the whip, aſſured him that ſhe did not come with an intention of thieving, but that

thoſe women had told her every body in that country might peckſel. "Peckſel! "and be d——d to them," ſaid the farmer, waving his whip very tremendouſly; "What! before I have gathered my ap- "ples myſelf! you cannot be ſo ignorant "as not to know that people never go a "peckſelling till after the owner has ga- "thered his orchard. Come, throw down "what you got; the beſt of my fruits I "warrant."

"There," ſaid Polly, throwing down her lapful of ſticks and rotten apples. The farmer ſtood amazed, firſt looking at her, then at the rubbiſh, proofs of her honeſty, while Polly wreſted her arm from him, and, picking up her hat, walked off. He called to her to return, and he would give her ſome good apples for her honeſty, but ſhe would not, and continued walking on, when Simonds, flinging away his whip, which

which he ſaw intimidated her, very humbly followed, intreating her to ſtay one moment. Polly took no other notice than by twitching herſelf away from which ever ſide he preſented himſelf. He then laid hold on her, but more gently than at firſt, and aſked her how ſhe came among that gang of women.—She would not tell him. He told her ſhe ſhould not go till ſhe did; and Polly, finding it in vain, gave up all reſiſtance, and, burſting into tears, told him that ſhe was very poor, very unfortunate, and got acquainted with them people one day that ſhe was loſt, and that hunger for more victuals than ſhe had to eat was the occaſion of her coming into his orchard for apples. "And are you ſo poor as "that," ſaid the farmer, whoſe ſtout heart had never been ſo moved before; "come "home along with me; we want a maid; "if you will, you ſhall live happily, and "not need to go about with thieves.

"Come,

" Come, come, and be not afraid of me,
" for I promiſe never to beat you again;
" you are too good a girl, and too honeſt
" for that."

Polly, who had begun to liſten with patience, at the mention of beating, which yet ſhe felt, revolted, and was for going off: but Simonds did not give up the matter ſo; but repreſented her dangerous ſituation with thoſe vagabonds, and, after much reaſonable perſuaſion, with many ſoothing expreſſions of ſorrow for having hurt her, led her ſobbing home to his mother, who was a good ſort of a croſs old woman, that liked none that could not work well, which ſhe uſed to preach up as the ultimate of human perfection, and which is a very becoming ſentiment in the miſtreſs of a farm-houſe. When ſhe had heard her ſon's account of Polly, and found that it was his will ſhe ſhould be

taken

taken for a ſervant, her conſent followed of courſe, as all the power was in the ſon's hands; but it was granted with ſome dignity, and after many enquiries, who ſhe was? and whence ſhe came? Polly told them a well-feigned ſtory, upon the plan of her true one, which ſatisfied them, and ſhe was immediately appointed under-dairymaid. She trembled at the mention of her poſt, and told them that ſhe had never milked but with one hand in her life. The old woman could not believe that ever any body in the world could attain the age of ſixteen and not know how to milk, and took this opportunity to inſinuate to her ſon, that ſhe muſt be an artful creature that had a mind to impoſe on them.

Simonds then aſked her concerning other work; but of every thing ſhe was ignorant, and almoſt ready to fall on her knees, and

hold

hold up her hands, every time she confessed herself so, under the severe frown of the mother, who interrupted her son, saying, they wanted no other than a dairymaid, and that such a delicate girl would not do for that. But Simonds, whose only view was to protect her, would not be led to turn her adrift, and said, "Then she may help "in the dairy till she does know how to "work in it." This point was happily settled; but sorrowful hours were yet to come for Polly, who, in London, knew nothing of household work, was ill calculated for it a hundred miles from London, where not only the mode of work, but the names of the utensils, differed so much, that it would not have been much less intelligible to her in Arabic. When she was told to get some barm, she went into the garden and returned with a handful of balm, little thinking that barm meant yeast. Another time, being bid to seek

the

the bucket, ſhe ſtood ſilent ſome time, unwilling to own that ſhe knew not what it was; but at laſt was reduced to aſk a little plough-boy what it meant; who very wiſely anſwered, why it was a bucket. She begged he would go and ſhew it to her, and was mightily ſurpriſed to ſee a pail. She was ſo much more ignorant than they expected her to be, and ſome of her miſ-apprehenſions ſo droll, that it was a conſtant diverſion to the other ſervants, among whom ſhe was a favourite, from her inſignificancy and ſoftneſs of diſpoſition; for none of them dreaded a rival in their maſter or miſtreſs's favour from a cauſe ſo weak, for they judged of her capacity by her knowledge of their manners, and often exclaimed, "Why, ſure you was brought "up in a wood," a caſe nearly their own, as they had been brought up in cottages on the farm, which was almoſt ſurrounded with wood. The houſe had once been a

manſion, and, during the commotions of the duke of Monmouth, and abdication of James, had been honoured with the ſojourn of many a noble; but its laſt great honour was conferred by king William, who ſlept in it one night, and which, no doubt, will be preſerved in oral tradition till the houſe is no more.

But neither retroſpect nor anticipations ſhall divert me from Polly, who all this time worked very hard within theſe antiquated walls, and her hands being tender, the ſkin ſoon came off; but the unremitted diligence of the mother did not permit her to lay by till they were healed; ſo that every morning her hands were freſh flayed of the little ſkin they had gained during the preceding night, which the old woman told her ſon was done on purpoſe that ſhe might be excuſed working.

Time

Time was when Polly could not cordially have mixed with ſuch company as the farmer and his mother; now ſhe looked up to them, but could not rally with their ſervants; and at dinner ſat ſaluting amongſt the munching tribe, abſent, fatigued, and without apetite; ſometimes a witty holla brought her to herſelf; the little plough mate alone (who ſhe taught to read) ſeemed to conſider her feelings, and gently puſhed her when ſhe had been repeatedly ſpoke to, without being ſenſible of it. As the winter drew on, ſhe found the want of warm cloaths, and ſhivering over her work, crowded to keep warm, till ſhe became half a foot ſhorter than when late ſtanding erect before her dancing maſter.

She had now no wine after dinner; and her food being poor, in the ſpring ſhe was ſeized with an ague, which was

not taken notice of by Mrs. Simonds, till one day that her ſon obſerved Polly ſitting in a damp corner of the waſh-houſe, leaning her head againſt the brick wall, and covered over witth an old ſack, which the little plough-mate had brought out for her during her ſhivering fit. Simonds was too well acquainted with the appearance of the ague, to have occaſion to aſk what was the matter, but with all the care and tenderneſs, with which he would have treated a ſick lamb, or ſick chick, he puſhed her on to the kitchen fire, placing her in the warm corner, and deſired his mother to give her a glaſs of Hollands.

In May her ague left her, and her ſpirits began to revive: when going through the coppice mead one morning, in bark peeling time, to carry the wood-men their breakfaſts, ſhe met the

girl of the barn who had been ſo generous to her; ſhe was pale, thin, and ragged; but her eyes, ever true to the humanity and kindneſs of her heart, recognized Polly with vivacity at meeting. In compliments, Polly could ſay all, the other look all; and they ſhook each other's dirty paw with the confidence of mutual good will.

I ha thought aw thee oft, ſaid the poor girl; haſt thee not heard 'bout zize; and then informed her, that at the laſt Aſſize, the people who ſtole the hemp were convicted, and that old Harlem, having received reſtitution, gave out that Polly might have her cloaths again which his ſon had ſeized. Never was news ſo welcome, for Polly was almoſt without cloaths; but that the amiable young Harlem ſhould have ſeized her cloaths, cauſed a ſigh; the girl of the

barn obſerved the mournful turn, and after viewing her ſome moments, ſaid, I ha got three ſhillings, dos't thee want ſome money ſadly? Polly told her that ſhe did not, and deſired her to lay down her bundle of wood, opened the baſket of victuals, and for once, forgeting her honeſty, made her friend eat heartily; but at parting, with tears in her eyes told her, they muſt not any more ſpeak to each other, as it was on condition that ſhe did not ſpeak to any of the gang of the barn, that Mrs. Simonds let her ſtay at the farm. The poor dutcheſs looked penſive, but kind as that fine lady would, had ſhe returned for anſwer, "but ſhe cannot prevent me wiſhing you well," and walked on the path which turned into the road, from whence Polly heard her ſing in a loud and clear voice, the twenty-ſecond Pſalm.

She

She was half an hour too late with the breakfaſt; and there being leſs than uſual, one of the boys, too hungry not to be angry with it, told Simonds, that through the hedge, he had ſeen Polly giving their victuals away to a beggar girl of the barn: Simonds reproved her for having to do with thoſe people, whom ſhe had promiſed never to ſpeak to a-again, and having a ſmall ſwitch in his hand, exerciſed it two or three times acroſs her coats, and ſent her back for more proviſions.

Polly ſcarcely felt the ſtrokes, but the affront was dire; and ſhe conſidered, when ſhe was out of ſight, whether ſhe ſhould not run away from a place where ſhe had received ſo great an indignity; but a flood of tears relieved her, and ſhe carried back the proviſions, with her old Saliſbury hat

pulled quite over her face, which was not ſeen for a week afterwards.

All her clothes were now become ſo old and ragged that ſhame for them encreaſed the depreſſion of her ſpirits:—her blue ſtockings were mended with every colour but blue; and the patches of her linſey woolſey gown varied as much from the original. A large mob, tied with its own ends, inſtead of ſtrings, and a blue woollen apron, that ſcrubbed her arms, were the chief ornaments of her dreſs.

This appearance was humiliating: yet ſometimes, when hard work and buſtle had wrought her to a total forgetfulneſs of her ſituation, a little warmth would enliven, and a few ſtray waves of fair hair ornament the lower part of a very delicate face; but this produced neither envy in the one ſex nor obſervation in the other.

The

The Sunday after, Polly received the intelligence of her clothes from her poor friend; ſhe ſent the little plough-boy for them. He brought them home ſafe; and Polly, for the firſt time, experienced, at ſight of them, as much momentary joy as ever ſhe had at her father's. She ran up ſtairs with them, and, while ſpending an hour in their examination and re-examination, experienced one of thoſe ſhort periods of care by which even a progreſs of miſery is now and then relieved; for, in the mean time, the dairy door was left open, and the dogs were at the milk and cheeſe. The cry of vengeance was loud againſt Polly when ſhe reached the kitchen; but Simonds happening to come in, ſaw that it was likely to fall heavy on the poor and defenceleſs girl, and took it on himſelf, ſaying, he had indeed left the door open; but there was no great harm done. Polly felt the charity of the reprieve, but her heart

could not acknowledge it in words, as reſentment for the ſtrokes of the ſwitch had not yet quite ſubſided.

Mr. Simonds failed not at this and every opportunity to reproach her ſon with his uſeleſs and good-for-nothing ſervant: but Simonds had heard the other ſervants ſay ſhe was a very tractable, good girl, and, though not able to do much, was ſo willing, that ſhe never left any work her miſtreſs ſet her about, till her ſtrength was quite ſpent. And Simonds himſelf, who was a ſilent obſerver of her conduct, had ſeveral times ſeen her wiping away the ſilent tear, and ready to faint under work that would have proved a trifle to the others: yet no complaint was ever heard from her, unleſs it was of her inability, which was ſo evident from her delicate form, that the maids had much pity for her, and, whenever they could, unknown

to

to Mrs. Simonds, did the work for her; then, when it was well finiſhed, would the old woman run to her ſon, ſaying, "See "what Polly can do, if ſhe has a mind to "it; it is only ſham when ſhe can't work." But ſtill Simonds paid no attention to the complaints: though ſenſible that Polly was of but little ſervice in the houſe, yet he never would conſent to let her be turned adrift, to fall again into the bad company he had taken her from; and, indeed, how could he? for compaſſion, which had moved him ſo much the firſt moment he beheld her, had ever ſince been kept awake by her gentle and reſigned manner of receiving his mother's cruel ſcoldings, and humble attention to himſelf, with conſtant and grateful acknowledgements for his protection, which he uſed to receive with ſo grave a countenance that Polly little ſuſpected how engaging they were. It may not be abrupt then, to own this ſtout far-

mer's heart on the eve of a painful ſtate; (though himſelf was the cauſe of many a melancholy looking eye in the neighbourhood) he could not eſcape the influence of a ſuperior education; for gentleneſs and ſenſe from Polly's mouth were not pearls before ſwine; rather like ſweet and ſtrong liquors to a perſon not rendered callous to its effect by uſe; and as it tells you not what it will do while you are drinking, ſo Polly's words ſlid into his heart, not irreſiſtibly, but unheeded: he did not think much of them at the time, for his attention was on her face; but in abſent moments recollection brought them to his mind, and reflection dwelt on them, while walking over his grounds, And no wonder that Polly's fame made her words remembered; for that which was before elegant, was now, by her early riſing, wholeſome and conſtant exerciſe, rendered compleat, by the

glow

glow of health that deepened the red and cleared the white of her complection.

As ſhe became more healthy, her good humour and ſpirits increaſed; and, inſtead of ſinking under the old woman's opprobrious terms, ſhe began to flatter and coax her, till, by degrees, ſhe became a friend to her, and ſhewed her how well ſhe could work muſlin; which Mrs. Simonds found her ſo expert at, that ſhe routed out all her old patterns, and plain muſlin aprons, and, after many cordial conſultations about piecing this and joining that, Polly was ſet to work, and it went on ſo much to the mother's ſatisfaction, and ſo eager was ſhe to have a great deal of it done, that ſhe told Polly for the future ſhe ſhould leave off the work of the houſe, which ſhe was not fit for, and do only needle work, which was very much wanted in the houſe. This was a greater ſatisfaction

tion than Polly had experienced for a long time.

The next morning ſhe roſe with joy to enter on her new ſcheme of life. She dreſſed every day now in her blue ribband and cambric bordered cap, and ſat ſinging and working all the day long; and at night, with a light heart and happy countenance, diverted the fire-ſide groupe with wonderful ſtories of London, where none of them, or their couſins of the ſeventh remove, had ever been, ſometimes telling them the manner of a play, the riſing of furies, the vaniſhing of a ghoſt, the killing of a ſparkling queen, and next the freaks of Harlequin; all which the little ploughboy uſed to take in with ſuch open-mouthed attention, that he ſeldom failed retailing it again all night in his ſleep; but the witches of Macbeth proved the moſt entertaining to the reſt of the company, as they were

not entirely free from the belief that two or three inhabited that country, and occaſionally came to the farm, as accidents had happened, and old broomſticks, &c. been found lying about, particularly one in the Copice mead, where, it was agreed on all ſides (not excepting even the ſtern Simonds) that it could not have gone of itſelf.

This free and gay behaviour made Polly the joy of the houſe, though not ſo well calculated to create reſpect, which hitherto, notwithſtanding her humble deportment, every body had felt towards her, and inconſciouſly treated her with; but now they delighted in her, and Simonds alſo became more enamoured.—Compaſſion was no longer wanted, and freedom of behaviour ſucceeded it. But Polly, unuſed to rough intimates, the moment Simonds commenced lover, baniſhed all familiarity, and, keeping herſelf at the greateſt diſtance, again

ſhrunk

ſhrunk into her former reſerved behaviour, which regained her that title to reſpect which ſhe had for ſome time laid aſide, though not forfeited. But ſhe was anxious not to carry herſelf too highly, and affront Simonds, remembering that he had been her only friend in times of need, and that it was owing to his goodneſs ſhe was ſuffered to remain at the farm: yet all theſe conſiderations could not enable her to keep up to her intentions; for, on Simonds offering to ſalute her one day, ſhe jumped backwards, crying with a countenance of horror, "Get away, get away; I hate, I "dread you." Which words the farmer laid up in his memory; and, turning as ſlowly from her as ſhe had ſwiftly from him, told her, ſhe then hated one, who, he thought, had given her but little cauſe for hatred; and it abated much of his good will towards her; but her intereſt was now pretty good with the mother, who ſaw that

Polly

Polly gave no encouragement to her ſon, but was a very good ſort of a girl, and did her a great deal of needle-work. She alſo taught the maids to make their own gowns; which laſt piece of notability ſo recommended her among the ſervants, that it procured her a ſweetheart. Handſome George was the ſmitten ſwain, and the gay Lathario of the villages around; for which character Polly (her heart being incorrupt) had early taken a diſlike to him, which ſhe had hitherto concealed very well. But he, to enhance his value with her, divulged a ſtory of his own cruelty, which, ſoon as it reached Polly, increaſed her diſlike to abhorrence, and ſhe viewed him attentively to ſee what there could poſſibly be agreeable in him. George miſtook it for a long look of approbation, and determined to add her heart to a ſtring of others which he had long poſſeſſed. The very firſt opportunity

his

his aſſiduity began, which happened in the following manner:

Simonds, returning with his men and teams to dinner, overtook Polly near the houſe, carrying pails of water, ſo much too heavy for her that it ſtrained every ſinew in her arms. George no ſooner ſaw this than, throwing ſome farming utenſils he had on his ſhoulder into the waggon, he haſted to relieve her, which Simonds obſerving, took it into his head that this man was the cauſe of Polly's reſerve to him, and when night came that all uſed to be cheerful in the chimney corners, a ſtrange alteration took place.—The farmer was ſtern and ſilent, and the reſt, though they knew nothing of what had paſſed, became ſo from ſympathy; which being a thing they never yet were aware of, they did not fix the fault upon the right perſon, but, taxing themſelves, kept repeating, What is

the

the matter with us? to-night we don't talk. Polly not ſuſpecting that Simonds was angry with her, tried to be chearful, but found it impoſſible; nor did any one's attempt at converſation ſucceed; and in ſilence they all departed to bed; but ſleep did not chaſe the idea which had crept into Simonds's mind. Jealouſy took a ſtrong hold of him; and revenge for every imagined ſlight, made him turn as hard a taſk-maſter to Polly, as his mother had been a miſtreſs; and now he found out, that he could not keep a good-for-nothing girl, to work aprons and nonſenſe.

She had been about a year with them, and hay time being come round, Simonds inſiſted on her going to work with the reſt, which ſhe did, to their great diverſion; for never having done it before, her manner was ſo different from the

the right way, and appeared ſo fooliſh, that the farmer himſelf was obliged to laugh, though he was very little diſpoſed ſo to do. At night ſhe was ſadly tired; ſo much ſo, that ſhe could neither eat nor ſleep. She roſe next morning at five, and at nine went again to hay-making, ſtiff, weak, and her hands all galled; but ſhe was determined not to diſpleaſe her maſter, and worked ſo hard, that at night when ſhe came to ſit down with the reſt at ſupper, ſhe fainted away three times ſucceſſively, which ſo frightened ſome of them, who had never ſeen any body faint before, that they immediately gave her up for dead, and was near fainting themſelves; the others flew about to her aſſiſtance; but Simonds, who had been freſh angered that day, by George's attending cloſe by her ſide and teaching her how to work, though he ſat very near her when ſhe fell, would not reach

a hand

a hand to help her; yet never took his eyes from her, till a dimneſs came in them from remorſe, for having ſo cruelly obliged her to over work herſelf—He got up, and walked away, but came back juſt as ſhe had fainted for the third time; he again gave her a long and ſerious look of attention, declaring, that ſhe never for the future ſhould work at all; and from that time he never did let her be put to any hard work; but yet, the attentions of George would never let him be at peace, and, becauſe ſhe laughed and talked to him on ſome trifling occaſion, Simonds took an opportunity to tell her, that his place was too laborious for her, and deſired her to look out for another by that day month. Polly, frightened to death at the thoughts of being again turned out into the world, intreated him in the moſt lowly and pathetic terms, to let her ſtay.

Every

Every ſuplicating word went to his heart; but he conceiving that ſhe only ſolicited to ſtay on George's account, gave very little attention to her, and went away without anſwering. Polly's pride was now rouſed, to think of the ſubmiſſions ſhe had made, and without effect. She was determined to ſerve no more, but once again ſeek her fortune in the fields and downs. She had now but a month to ſtay at the farm, during which ſhe could ſcarcely ſmother her reſentment to Simonds, and never ſpoke to him, or looked at him, or handed any thing to him at table as uſual; no more civil ſpeeches of gratitude, which was one of the ſnares that caught his heart: all her attentions were paid to the mother; but as the laſt week of her ſtay drew towards an end, and no body ſaid any thing of her going, ſhe began to have ſome hopes that ſhe might yet ſtay: but if the diſappointment

pointment could have filled her meaſure of miſery, Polly's was complete: for at dinner, on that very day that ſhe had ſaid to herſelf, I ſhall certainly ſtay, Simonds told his mother he had hired a good tidy girl for her, and that ſhe was to come on Wedneſday next. Polly's head by degrees ſunk lower and lower till it was almoſt in her plate; but ſhe kept on chopping and cuting her victuals, and not one tear eſcaped. But ceremony, at that table, never confining any one longer than they were eating, Polly was the firſt that walked off, and, going into an empty barn, juſt then out of uſe, ſhe gave herſelf up to the moſt violent fit of grief—A copious flood of tears now ſucceeding, the heart threw off ſome of its preſſure, and ſhe became, by ſlow degrees, a little more tranquil and compoſed; and and riſing from a bundle of ſtraw, on which ſhe had ſat, returned through the orchard to the houſe, and, taking her work, was more

attentive

attentive to it than uſual, for ſhe never once looked from it, or ſpoke. She put her bonnet on, and no one ſaw her face any more that day; but, while thus ſecluded from all external affairs, and retired under her bonnet, her pride, her reſentment, gave way, and, fearing the ſad proſpect before her, began to look for a friend again in Simonds, and, as ſhe had found him generous, was not without hopes that by ſmiling intreaties ſhe might work on his compaſſion, and that he would relent, and let her ſtay; but ſhe never had the courage to put this ſcheme in execution; for the moment ſhe came near him, with an intention of ſpeaking, her voice failed her; and once, though ſhe had begun, ſhe could not proceed for trembling; ſo, giving up her cauſe, ſhe grew quite unhappy. All this Simonds ſaw, and ſtill retained his reſolution; till one day after dinner, when every thing was cleared away, and all the ſervants gone

to their ſeveral works; Simonds returned at an unuſual time, and, paſſing by the great kitchen door, ſaw Polly at the farther end of it, in a diſconſolate manner reſting her chin on her hand, while ſhe looked with tearful eyes on the ſky, ſinging in the moſt touching voice a melancholy ſong, and trotting her foot. His mother coming by, he deſired her to look at her idle girl; adding, "But, however, as you like "her, and ſhe is ſo unhappy at going, you "may tell her ſhe may ſtay; though ſhe "is a very great plague; that's the truth "on it." The mother paſſed on to the dairy, after making ſome ſhort anſwer; but Simonds remained till the ſong was finiſhed.

Polly was ſoon informed of this, and her fluctuating ſpirits roſe ſo much above par, that the moſt trivial circumſtance brightened up all the good humour of her

countenance, and gave her an alacrity to chat more ſpirited than uſual: now and then ſhe was all hilarity.

One day, coming dancing out of the farm-yard, with a few of thoſe ſportive bounds ſhe uſed to practiſe at her father's, began, with a re-animated and glowing countenance, giving an account to Mrs. Simonds, and ſome others that were ſtanding about, of a conteſt ſhe had been watching between an old cow and two young ones, neither of which the former would permit to come near a crib of hay; which being of a ſquare make, ſhe had the greateſt difficulty in the world to defend; for, while ſhe protected one ſide, the other was attacked, and ſhe was content to forbear eating herſelf, rather than relax in the vigilance of her purpoſe. This ſcene having highly delighted Polly, ſhe dwelt with pleaſure on the deſcription, which was rendered

dered more intereſting by all the graces of a beautiful ſet of teeth, which were ſeldom diſplayed, and dimpled vivid cheek, whoſe hue varied as her ſtory did. But her intelligent eye going round with pleaſure among her auditors, lighted upon one that ſhe did not know was in the room: 'twas Simonds leaning againſt a table, apparently with every nerve of anger unſtrung, his countenance expreſſive of full approbation, and his eye fixed upon her. She pranced quickly from this object, which, however, ſtuck not the leſs deeply in her mind, and a much more viſible alteration taking place in her countenance than had yet happened, ſhe thought proper to turn her face the other way, and, haſtily ending her recital, went out of the room, ſurpriſed that the circumſtance ſhould affect her ſo much, or give her ſuch pleaſure on recollection. But few there are, who, with a diſengaged heart and liberal mind, are proof againſt the

flattering preſent of ſincere attachment; and ſo evident was that of Simonds's for her, that from that moment Polly was convinced of it: ſhe had ſome notion of it before, but never cared about it: now ſhe felt it, and began to ſuſpect that her treacherous heart had held a ſecret negotiation with his, which on this occaſion was betrayed to her; but pride and the dear penſive recollection of young Harlem were ſo well fixed in her mind, that the balance became perfect, and indifference ſeemed to preſide.

She remained ignorant of her maſter's jealouſy of George, and continued, therefore, to talk to him with all the freedom ſhe was accuſtomed to, adding to it the acceptation of ſome blue corn flowers, which ſhe wore to church, where the ſquire's family was expected for the firſt Sunday ſince they came down; but, while the clowns

clowns were waiting about the church porch for their arrival, a young woman of the moſt prepoſſeſſing appearance paſſed before them into the church: ſhe was dreſſed like a country girl, but ſo well ſhaped, and her attitude ſo naturally lovely, that the clergyman aſked, with ſome earneſtneſs, whoſe good girl that was? for her innocent look was more remarkable than her beauty, as ſhe had not much colour; but the delicacy of her complexion was given its due advantage by the reddeſt lips, and the contraſt of a black velvet collar.

She was not very conſpicuous in the church, as ſhe ſat among the village girls, and minded her book, but the ſquire's ſon was ſmitten to diſtraction with her chin alone, and remained on his knees, when the whole congregation were ſtanding.—This unknown laſs was Polly new-dreſſed from her redeemed box.

As ſhe returned home, Simonds aſked her, in the moſt careleſs manner, who gave her them pretty blue flowers. She told him, and thought no more of it: but, far from going out of his mind, it lay working there, till his impatience and vexation nearly betrayed him every time ſhe and her blue flowers came in ſight; and long after the latter were faded did they live in poor Simonds's memory, blooming anew every day that the ſubſtitute vexation ſupplied their place. While Polly, ignorant of having given any cauſe of offence, found herſelf to be upon a different footing to what ſhe had ſuſpected, and began alſo to be very reſerved; for Simonds ſcarce ever looked towards her, or ſpoke to her for ſeveral weeks, till one market day, when Mrs. Simonds, returning home on horſeback, left Polly in great diſtreſs about walking by herſelf, the lonelineſs of the way, rather than the length, diſmaying her.

Hitherto

Hitherto her timidity had produced too much mirth, not to be well attended to and found out under all her diſguiſes, and Simonds ſaw the lurking fear in her countenance, as ſhe caſt a wiſhful look after his mother, when ſhe rode off: it induced him to aſk her how ſhe returned home; but the queſtion was ſo little a propos, while her imagination was figuring lions and witches in the wood, that her anſwer was unintelligible, till two tears, reſting on her chin, which her hat left in view, explained it.

Simonds told her ſhe might walk home with him. Inſtantly the lions and witches vaniſhed, and ſhe experienced a tranſition from imaginary to real diſtreſs:—but education had given power, even to the ſincere heart of Polly, to thank Simonds with cordiality for his offer, which had turned her pale, and ſhe was then ſcheming to avoid; but it was not to be done with any

appearance of civility: ſo, giving herſelf up to the current in which ſhe was involved, about duſk ſhe ſet out with the farmer, who conducted her in ſilence to the brink of a hill, when Polly, ſtarting with aſtoniſhment, aſked what large river that was which lay before them, for the dew, or fog, was ſo condenſed along the bottom of the winding valley, that it bore exactly the appearance of a large ſtream, and Simonds found it difficult to convince Polly that under it lay the well-known paſture land and orchards which ſurrounded his houſe, till ſeeing the church ſteeple and the chimney tops, riſing above the fog, undeceived her.

Simonds then put her into the path which led to the houſe, ſaying, he ſhould croſs the fields, and ſee how the cattle were diſpoſed of, before he came home; but aſked Polly if ſhe would not firſt ſhake hands with him, for having taken more care of her

her than ſhe expected. Polly, moved with the truth of the reproach, and penetrated by gratitude, encouraged every emotion which aroſe in his favour, and advancing, inſtead of retreating as the farmer expected, gave into his a frank hand, and ſecured a favourable bias for ever; the recollection of that moment remaining proof againſt every effort that Simonds afterwards made to ſhake her ſweetneſs of diſpoſition from his remembrance; for the jealouſy not only remained but increaſed from every incident which promiſed to alay it, till miſery took place in a mind which for thirty years had been content.—And again he would have ſent her away, but for fear of what hardſhips might befal one ſo helpleſs in the world, and ſo attractive in her perſon; for ſeveral of her admirers were pointed out to Simonds, and he could not but obſerve himſelf, that the ſquire's ſon was now conſtant at church for the ſake of ſeeing Polly,

and ſhe was ſeldom abſent from a much better motive, which motive was firſt implanted in her heart by the example of a beggar; for ſufferings, and the friendſhip of the barn girl, led Polly to be attentive to all ſuch objects, one of which ſhe had obſerved for many a Sunday liſtening to the church ſervice from without, at a broken pane of glaſs in the window neareſt the pulpit. Polly wiſhed to know who this might be; but could only ſee the top of the head, which was covered with dark brown hair ſtanding on end: but ſeeing the head ready placed one Sunday before ſervice began, ſhe ſtepped out to the lone ſide of the church, and ſaw, ſitting on a tomb ſtone, the figure of a woman who appeared to be nought but ſkin and bone.—The tomb juſt raiſed her to the broken pane, near which, with her forehead encloſed in an emaciated white hand, ſhe leaned her head. Her arm and hair hid the reſt of

her

her face; but Polly was ſufficiently intereſted to aſk the clerk the reaſon of her not coming into the church. "Why, look at "her," returned he. She did ſo, and ſaw her feet hanging from the tomb, without either ſhoes or ſtockings.—"You ſee what "a figure ſhe is," continued he; "the "boys would laugh at her all church time, "and yet I could hardly keep her out for "a long while: and, rot her, I believe "ſhe broke that pane of glaſs on purpoſe "that ſhe might hear; but, however, I "believe ſhe has not long to ſtay in this "world, for ſhe has not been able to work "for this laſt year, and all the money ſhe "had went to bury her mother, who is "juſt gone before her."

The clergyman's arrival interrupted them, and they haſted into the church.—At every interval of the ſervice Polly could not but look towards the brown rough

head of hair: her heart was moved, and the ſame ſentiments of piety began to awaken in her heart which ſhe conceived to influence the pitiful object before her. As ſoon as the church was done, Polly went round to ſpeak to the perſon, but ſhe was gone; and, not ſeeing her for ſeveral Sundays afterwards, ſhe enquired about her of the clerk.—"Why, you knew her very "well," ſaid he; "ſhe was the girl who "lived at the barn."—"And where does "ſhe live now?" cried Polly eagerly.—"Why there," returned the clerk, pointing to a new-made grave in the corner of the church-yard by itſelf. Polly flew to it, while the tears burſt from the agony of her heart. She wrung her hands, and repeated "Poor Mary!" as faſt as her bitter ſighs would permit. She longed to fling herſelf on the grave of her paſt friend, but prudence prevented her exhibiting ſuch a ſcene, and ſhe returned home to love Mary

more

more than ever. She ſought in the New Teſtament for all accounts of a future ſtate, and looked forward to that time with firm hope of again meeting with a perſon, who on earth ſhe had never any opportunity of ſhewing her gratitude towards.

During the firſt acquaintance with the barn girl, Polly had remarked with what care ſhe had folded up, in numberleſs rags, about twenty very old leaves of the New Teſtament, which ſhe uſed to prevail on Polly to read over and over again to her.—But when Polly reperuſed thoſe chapters, they wrung her heart, and opened her eyes to truths which ſhe had read over before without attention; and ſhe remained in aſtoniſhment that neither the love of her Maker nor regard to her own ſalvation ſhould produce that religious ſtate of mind which the death of a friend had brought about: but as ſhe read farther it was explained

plained to her; ſhe ſaw that misfortunes were ſalutary, that afflictions, when from the hand of God, turned out bleſſings, and what reaſon we have to return thanks for all things. Mary's grave ſoon became ſurrounded with others, and had no ſtone to mark it; but Polly could always diſtinguiſh it; and it appeared to her more dear, more honourable, than if piles of marble had roſe above it; and at every look towards it ſhe felt thoſe ſentiments of piety and virtue revive which the poor deceaſed had firſt given riſe to; but, forgetful that her own endeavours were neceſſary to concur with ſuch impulſes, ſhe remained ſatisfied that the tendency of her mind was good, and, paſſing no examination on herſelf, continued in that rebellion to her family, which a ſecond and more bitter hour was to awaken her to a repentance of.

Polly was careful not to let any of the family at the farm know of the death of Mary, leſt they ſhould be offended at the concern it gave her, for her dejection was ſo viſible that every one took notice of it. She attributed it to illneſs; but Simonds ſuſpected ſhe was in love, which encreaſed his own gloom, and he was forward to ſhew her every ſymptom of diſlike; but truth riſing above all things, often betryed him.

Thus paſſed many months till an accident decided the fate of Simonds. He received a dangerous kick on the arm from a vicious horſe, which laid open the fleſh to the bone, and he was obliged to go to the diſtance of five miles to have it dreſſed by an apothecary, who could not leave home. This Simonds deferred as long as he poſſibly could, on account of the loſs of time, which made the wound flow in healing,

and very painful, from being fretted with the old bandages, which, with the ſalve, got dry, and inflamed the wound. One hot day, having uſed his arm a great deal, the pain became ſo extreme that he was obliged to quit the fields, and entering his houſe much diſpirited, ſunk into a chair, and acknowledged to his mother that he believed his arm was mortifying, and that it would be the death of him.

Polly was then working at the other end of the kitchen, but in an inſtant was ſtanding at his elbow, telling him, in the ſofteſt accents, that ſhe had ſeen an arm much worſe than his cured, and knew how to treat it, and that, if he would truſt to her, ſhe was ſure ſhe could give him eaſe. —He conſented, and Polly, taking off all the old bandages, with a gentle hand, and warm milk and water, waſhed the wound and dried ſalve all round it; then, ſending

the

the ready and anxious mother for ſome old fine rags, ſcraped lint, which, with ſome cooling ſalve and freſh linen, ſhe bound up his arm with, and perſuaded him to go and ly down, which he did for ſome hours, and roſe ſo refreſhed and free from pain that he declared he thought himſelf in heaven, and enquired for his kind nurſe, whoſe tender treatment of him while in pain had almoſt diveſted him of his jealouſy; for he recollected and dwelt on it with pleaſure, that, while dreſſing his arm, in his extremeſt pain he looked up to her, and again beheld that ſweet face with the tear of pity rolling down it, that had ſo intereſted him the firſt time he ever ſaw her in the orchard.

Polly coming in, interrupted this meditation, and with great cheerfulneſs congratulated him on being ſo much better; he looked at her, and, without returning any

anſwer,

anſwer, grew ſullen; for at ſight of her his jealouſy returned, and he foreboded that fate had not determined her for him.

Polly, who was ſecretly pleaſing herſelf with the thought of regaining his good will, felt not a little at this cool ſilent treatment, and told him with emotion, that, if any body did but wiſh her half as well as ſhe wiſhed him, ſhe ſhould always think it worth her while to give them an anſwer. —"Wiſh me well," cried he, vibrating with the ſound, "you hate me; you "know it is George you wiſh well to." —"It is not George," returned ſhe, with more quickneſs than ever he had heard her ſpeak before. This ſo far reconciled him, that, with ſome good-nature, mixed with concern, he ſaid, it would give him leſs pain to ſee her like any one elſe in the world than George; and, taking her by the hand, "tell me, Polly, ſincerely,"

ſaid

ſaid he, examining her countenance ſted-faſtly, " who it is then that you do wiſh " particularly well to."—" Why, it is to " one that I am particularly obliged to; " one that ſaved me from ſtarving, and " preferred my welfare to his own intereſt." —" Some London ſpark, I dare believe," ſaid the farmer, letting go her hand, which till now had been held with ſome degree of warmth, " and I ſuppoſe you will be " leaving us, one day or other, to go to " him; but I too have been your friend, " and done more for you than I would for " any one elſe, yet you think nothing of " that."—" I do think of it," ſaid Polly, with tears in her eyes, " and never, never, " can forget it; nor will ever leave this " houſe, while you and your mother like " I ſhould ſtay in it."

" But one queſtion more, Polly," ſaid Simonds, detaining her, " and I have " done

"done for ever: Will you be miſtreſs of "this houſe? To-day is Saturday; ſhall "I put up the banns of our marriage to-"morrow?"

No, not to-morrow, indeed." But it happened nevertheleſs; and they remained a happy couple till death; at the approach of which, many years afterwards, Mrs. Simonds (Polly) was ſeized with remorſe for never having informed her family of her welfare, and ſuffered thoſe very pangs ſhe had hoped to inflict by keeping her fate to them a myſtery. In vain ſhe flung herſelf into the arms of her huſband, ſeeking comfort and conſolation; for he was already infected with the ſame fever ſhe was, and died a few hours after he was taken back to his room, from whence he would be brought to take leave of her.

The

The ſame night terminated her exiſtence, and her laſt words were ſpent in lamenting the difference between herſelf and Mary, who had given the only few ſhillings ſhe had left, to procure her mother a warmer coffin than the ſhell which the pariſh allowed.

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